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PHILADELPHIA WILDCAT

The public transportation system of Philadelphia employs about 5,200 drivers, mechanics, and maintenance personnel. The average wage of a worker is $148 a week, $100 after taxes: a level which gives him the "right" to apply for food stamps at the Public Assistance Office, all for 40 hours a week of work. A few years ago, this was considered well-paid work, not only because the real wage was higher at that point (before inflation), but also because with overtime, now non-existent, the money-wage was itself higher (about $90 additional a week). Today, the SEPTA – South Eastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority – workers can only add to their meager wages the $15 that they can receive from Public Assistance as "individuals living in a state of poverty"! (1)

The wildcat strike of the SEPTA workers, which lasted from the 12th to the 21st of April, demonstrates the increasing level of activity of the American working class within the context of American capitalism's increasing difficulties, the changing *forms* of this activity (wildcats, confrontations with the State institutions) and the changing *subjects* of this activity (namely, young workers). It is interesting to note that while workers were acting on their own against the unions, the police, the city and state administrations and the judiciary system, the so-called Left mobilized itself for the demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Only some more "workerist" groups turned their attention toward the strike, and even there, their activity never got beyond a fairly reactionary level.

Striking transit employees block trolley tracks in defiance of an order to go back to work.

One of the groups (the Labor Committee) even dared to distribute a leaflet calling for a United Front of the Left with the workers for ". . . for the defense of the union!" Naturally none of the workers in the WILDCAT strike responded to the call, no doubt due to a lack of class consciousness . . .

On April 8th the local union leadership of the national TWU -- Transport Workers Union -- presented to the rank-and-file a contract for the next two years. This included a wage raise of $.75/hour over a 21-month period and a raise in retirement pensions. In spite of the fact that the union advised acceptance of the contract, and the "public" (i. e. the press) already assumed it would be accepted, the rank-and-file voted against the contract by a 2-to-1 majority and voted for a strike. This produced a great deal of confusion: the union and the bosses immediately agreed to continue negotiations, hoping that in the additional time the workers would calm down.

The union also published a communique, in which it warned against "all forms of wildcat activity which is illegal (sic), foolish, and can only create confusion" (2). Knowing that the workers were divided over the attitude they should have toward the union, the management of the company announced that: ". . . the strike is not only against the public but also against their own union leadership." (3) In this way they tried to isolate the anti-union militants from those who were still faithful to the union. But it had no such results.

On April 12th the 5000 and some employees of the public transport system of the city went out on strike. Strong pickets were formed at the depots and a majority of the lines in the city were halted. (4) The International (of the union) disavowed the strikers and called the strike "irresponsible," thus denying the strikers access to the strike fund in order to weaken their capacity to struggle. On the local level, however, the leadership supported the strike in spite of themselves as the only means of maintaining contact with the workers and eventually regaining control. This type of scheming between the international and the locals is becoming more and more frequent as a means to crush the workers' initiative.

The Strike Spreads

On April 13th there was a new development: the workers of Red Arrow, working under another contract (see note 4) joined the action and went out on strike, thereby blocking the entire public transport system for the city and suburbs. About a million people a day were affected, business suffered heavy losses, and the overuse of cars caused massive traffic jams in the center of the city throughout most of the day.

It should be added here that the transportation system in American cities is characterized increasingly by total anarchy, due to both the saturation of private cars and the financial crisis in the public transportation system. In Philadelphia, for example, the number of private vehicles has grown by 30% in the last seven years while public transportation has suffered a lowering of its profitability and therefore its efficiency. About 70% of the public transportation vehicles in Philadelphia are more than 14 years old, and successive price hikes proved insufficient to balance costs and maintain even a constant level of profitability. American capitalism's refusal to nationalize these sectors can be explained only in terms of the fear aroused for the future of private corporate capitalism by the steady growth of the state-controlled sector of the economy. However, as the current low levels of profitability and of growth continue, the political weight of the anarchy of the cities (transportation, health, education) will necessarily force the State to take charge of these sectors totally or partially.

On the 13th and 14th of April it became evident that the strike was very solid. A *Committee for the Refusal of the Contract* was formed among rank-and-file picketers and took a public position against the union policies. Contacts were established between the SEPTA pickets and the 300 workers on strike in the other company.

The workers knew very well their power --"if we disturb things that much it's because we're important"-- and that the company and the city administration couldn't allow this situation to continue. Events were in fact precipitated by the intervention of the State governor, the city administration and the Federal Courts which obtained an injunction against the continuation of the strike. The injunction was used immediately and two local union leaders were jailed. This measure caused much agitation amongst the workers: the picket lines were reinforced by masses of workers and the general feeling was against the administrative machine and against the system of "justice."

As the strike continued the press threw itself against these workers who don't respect the "public." The workers acted aggressively against the newspaper reporters, seeing them as the expression of the anti-strike campaign. Workers interviewed on the picket line refused to give their names, saying they didn't trust the reporters. One newpaper received a threatening phone call: "if other strikers are jailed we'll stop life in this city; we'll ask the truckers to block it and the dockers to go out on strike." (5) The imprisonment of the union leaders acted at first to unify the workers behind their union leaders. But this effect was short-lived. After a few hours in prison the two union leaders were freed, according to the very words of the judges, in order to convince their men to return to work. This effort completely backfired. In the eyes of the workers, these tough leaders had become sell-outs who went over to the other side to save their own skin. Against the International, against the State, and, from then on, against its own local, the wildcat strike continued over the next six days. Those who had seen the worker reaction against the judiciary system as a defense of the union were now totally confused. In reality the arrests had been taken as an attack against the workers' movement (which

many workers still identified with the union): "The labor movement is 60 years old. If we return to work under this pressure we'll bring it back several years," one worker on the picket line said. (6)

The union then took up the massive task of breaking the strike. Local bureaucrats called for a back-to-work movement on the pretext that the company would only negotiate after the strike was over. The workers answered: "No contract, no work!" The same night scabs entered the depots and got the busses in running order in preparation for a return to work, but, discovered by the strikers, they were chased and thrown out of the depots. The press then stepped up its attacks on the workers, characterizing them in an editorial by an insubordination to Justice that could lead to "TOTAL chaos". Under these pressures the workers of the small Red Arrow company, also under the threat of a Federal Court injunction, returned to work. But the workers quickly understood that if they passively waited for the "solution", they would be obliged to accept the Union proposals and they therefore acted on their own to get out of the impasse in which the Union had enclosed them. The picket lines were reinforced and organized by several shopstewards who had broken with the Union. On April 16th picket lines formed almost entirely by young workers moved toward the depots of the Red Arrow company and prevented the busses from leaving; right away the workers there went out on strike for a second time, and again the entire public transportation system was blocked.

The Injunction Goes Down the Toilet

Throughout this time the union leaders went to depot after depot calling for a return to work. Physically protected by union functionaries they cried: "I tell you you've got to return. What's your answer?" - "No," answer the picketers. A poster that the workers carried on the picket lines showed the injunction being thrown into a toilet. The night of the 16th, on TV, the leadership called on the workers to return, but the latter continued their refusal. The picket lines in front of the Red Arrow were scattered by the police. In other depots workers fought with the police and one depot was cordoned off by the police. In order to isolate the strikers, the Union then began talking about "lots of workers" who were ready to go back to work. Nevertheless they recognized that the scabs that they supported were not strong enough to face the pickets: as one union bureaucrat said, "We told them [the scabs] not to get killed." (7) In the face of this determination the Federal government announced the possibility of sending in the National Guard. On the picket lines, the workers answered: "Let them send us the National Guard. There will be at least 100 wounded or dead the first day." Others threatened to sabotage the machinery. (8)

On April 17th SEPTA, going back on its previous position, agreed to a wage increase which would be retroactive to before the strike. Meanwhile the leaders continued ued to "visit" the depots, calling for a return to work but ...."they no longer hear us!" they say. (9) In the three largest terminals, at which resistance to the union was the greatest, they were even physically threatened and had aggs thrown at them. Appalled, the bureaucrats blamed the wildcat on "radical dissenters."

In this strike the most active participants were the young black and white workers, and racism was, as in many previous actions, overcome by the necessity of workers unity in confrontation with the union, the bosses, and the State. This new social composition of the American working class (youth and blacks) showed itself in this strike in the new militancy. It is obviously not a question of a generation conflict, but simply of the material conditions of this young part of the working class which is more strongly affected by the problems of capitalism (inflation, unemployment) than the older workers with years of seniority. (10) The unions use and reinforce this differentiation between the youthful part of the working class and the "old-timers" frequently. In fact one of the demands to which the unions are giving more importance today is that of a pension fund (see the "30-and-out" during the GM strike), with the goal of assuring control over the workers with a certain seniority and thereby opposing them to the young workers who don't give a shit about this kind of demand. In SEPTA more than half of the workers are young: "it is the young who are less afraid of expressing themselves, less inclined to accept what is offered to them as the old workers in the past had done." (11)

On April 19th the wildcat strike was still solid. In the three main depots the picket lines were manned by about 200 men each. Once again the pickets blocked the Red Arrow depots (the workers there had again returned to work), and once again they succeeded in involving the rest of the workers. By their persistence in blocking the few lines of this company the workers showed how well they understood that their force depended on their unity. Towards the evening of the 20th the union decided to break the strike once and for all. Starting at 2am on the morning of April 21st, groups of scabs escorted by union bureaucrats confronted the picket lines. According to the press, the union had set up a communications network between the depots and, it seems, they had not refused technical assistance from the police! Nevertheless, even at that hour of the morning the picketers were there in greater numbers than the scabs, amongst whom there were even some who still had doubts about what they were doing and wouldn't be the first to cross the strikers' picket lines. Faced with this situation, the union leadership once again tried persuasion:

"You can't do anything to me that hasn't already been done," the Union president said, with tears in his eyes. "You're hurting yourselves. You've been out nine days. You've got families. There's no way in the world we can beat them."

"No contract, no work!" the men chanted, drowning out his words.

Another bureaucrat told them if they didn't go back to work, "Your employer will send you notice of immediate ate dismissal."

The men cheered.

"He's our president," the bureaucrat cried, "Are you going to follow him or not?"

"No!"

"I don't want to see the membership of the union go to jail," the president insisted.

"I'll go to jail," a worker shouted. "Tell us what time to be there, we'll be there. The judge can have 4,200 of us brought in tomorrow." (12)

The Union Breaks the Strike

At 6 am the union leaders and 15 older drivers tried to cross the picket lines at one of the depots. In response to the aggressiveness of the workers who stood in front of the busses, the union once again threatened them with the intervention of the police who were waiting at a distance. The workers cried: "Nothing can be jammed down our throats, we've proved that we're unified and this is the only thing that counts now. After seven days, they can't stop us from going out if we're not satisfied." (13) When one or two busses tried to leave the depots, young workers resisted once again, physically, and fighting broke out. Someone suggested to the union leadership that they demand the intervention of the police. The leadership answered: "No, we want to do this properly." (14) "Properly" seems to mean doing the police's job themselves. After the first busses finally managed to leave, more workers crossed the picket lines, which fell apart little by little, the workers disgusted and demoralized. A few of the workers still drove around the city in cars to urge the other workers not to return to work. But it was too late, as many workers had already followed the back-to-work order. Nonetheless, the transit lines were only in full operation by the evening of the following day. A week later it was found that there were still 1,300 "radical dissenters" who voted against the new contract, which was practically the same as the first one.

The combativity of the workers in this wildcat strike

Transit Workers Getting Back to Work Orders from the Top: TWU head and Vice-President at 10th and Luzerne Streets Carbarn

can be measured by the fact that it lasted 9 days against the State (the administration, the judicial system, the police) and the Union (International and local), beaten down daily by the radio, the TV, and the Press. By the crucial nature of the position that they hold in the social organization of capitalist production--transportation – these workers would necessarily run up against an enormous resistance on the part of capitalism, all the more aggressive because they had gone beyond the organization which, within capitalism, is supposed to control them: i.e. the union. But if this explains, to a certain degree, the vulnerability and defeat of the strike, it was this same fact (their position in the social process of production) that allowed the development of this strike towards levels of radicality not reached by "normal" wildcat strikes in other sectors of production. Thus, above and beyond the bitter resistance with which the workers opposed the union, the dynamism of the struggle brought it into clear opposition to the judicial system, thus demystifying its "neutral" role in society. "This strike is no longer that of the union against the company, but that of the rank-and-file workers against the Judicial bully," said one worker. (15) The strike was a struggle against inflation, which is one of the forms in which the American working class is becoming conscious of capitalsim's difficulties. Finally, the anti-union struggle took on here a character that went way beyond that of a simple wildcat strike. The gap between the rank-and-file and the local union bureaucrats was widened and reinforced here again in physical confrontation. The workers' demonstrated their capacity to organize themselves, not only in the setting up of picket lines – normally a characteristic of the self-isolation of the strike – but above all in the workers' refusal to be confined to their own workplaces in their attempts to widen the strike to the other local and workers (the Red Arrow Company). However, in spite of the clearly repressive police role of the union, which went as far as organizing scabs, the workers remained surprised and paralysed; this was no doubt one of the immediate reasons for the failure of their action. In the post-war period the wildcat movements that have developed have often remained on the level of attempts to exert *pressure* on the unions and thus have been open to immediate cooptation by them.

Today American capitalism's efforts to reduce the paid part of the work day ––either through inflation or through an increase in productivity of labor – thus increasing the part of unpaid labor (i. e. surplus value), are necessary to maintain profits which are threatened by increasing difficulties. In this context, the role of the union is becoming more and more limited. Obliged to fulfill the workers' demands in order to get their confidence and control them, the union is now faced with the fact that capitalism itself can't fulfill these demands because of its problems. But these same problems oblige the workers to fight (inflation, unemployment). and the workers are thus obliged to fight more and more beyond the union's limits, *which are the same as those of capitalism.* In other words, the material basis of union reformism is disappearing with the in-

Transit Workers Give Answer to Back-to-Work Appeal

Workers at 10th and Luzerne sts. depot thumb down plea

creasing economic stagnation. The wildcat struggles tend to become not only pressure on the unions, but destruction of the union's control and development of the workers capacity to act and organize for themselves. The struggle of the Philadelphia SEPTA workers is only a small part of this process.

Jorge M. E.
Philadelphia
May 1971

notes

(1) SEPTA is a public authority with a public board of representatives from the Philadelphia area and other counties. It was created in the 60's to take over and reorganize a private enterprise that ran the transportation system. The take-over was the result of the loss of profitability of the enterprise. Today the public authority gets some subsidies from the city and other counties, but not enough to offset the costs of its functioning.

(2) *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 9, 1971.
(3) *TPI* April 11, 1971.
(4) The *Red Arrow* is another small division of the SEPTA that operates a few lines in the suburban areas. The workers there have another union. In the days that followed, this line was affected as the strike widened.
(5)*TPI* April 15, 1971.
(6) *TPI* April 16, 1971.
(7) *The Evening Bulletin*, April 16, 1971.
(8) and (9) *TPI* April 18, 1971.
(10) see *Living Conditions in the US* in **Root and Branch No. 2.**
(11) *TPI*, April 16, 1971.
(12), (13), and (14) *TEB*, April 21, 1971.
(15)*TPI*, April 21, 1971.

Revolution & Violence: A Few Reflections

The following article was written by a French comrade a year ago. To the extent that it describes the development of various currents in the left, mostly student, groups in France, it is still mostly accurate. We are publishing it, however, not so much for this reason as for its discussion of certain problems of action and organization faced by would-be revolutionaries everywhere.

Since May 1968, things have developed quite a bit in France within the revolutionary (or supposedly revolutionary) groups. During a first period, for about the first year after the "events", the movement as a whole waited for a renewal of operations. At the end of July 1968 the word was, "as always, the revolution will take place in October." The reopening of the universities appeared full of promise. After that, everyone waited for May 1969. When this anniversary passed, however, it became clear to eveyone that history never reproduces itself twice in the same way and that it is useless to await the repetition of events and action already behind us.

In the university this situation was reflected in the students' progressive loss of interest in the struggle. Mostly they fell back into reformist illusions. As time passed, these illusions wore through a bit and gave way to a sort of openly displayed disgust and apathy. The students figured out that their passage through the Faculties doesn't (if it ever did) open up a route to the upper strata of the ruling class, and most often they saw it simply as a way to delay their entry into the world of production. Studies appear to them as a way to prolong the "freedom" of adolescence. Such is the ideological expression of the material condition of the students. Of course, this situation is not at all against the interests of the ruling class. If university enrollment was seriously decreased through some new system of selection, the result would be the entrance of a large number of young people onto the labor market, with a dangerous increase in unemployment. On the other hand, keeping the students at school, a sort of unemployed relief, has two advantages: it permits the damming up of this flood of labor-power and preserves it as a threat to other workers; and it concentrates the dissidents of every stripe in regular ghettos. When their time is up, the students will have learned something more or less useful and, with age, will be calmer and more easily directed.

During this time the politically-minded students found themselves reduced to near powerlessness within the Faculties. While certainly tolerated by their fellows and not without their sympathy, they neither carried the mass of the students with them nor really even touched them. In such a situation, sectarianization could only accelerate. Divided because they were weak, splitting more and more, the students were compelled to accentuate the divergencies among themselves. Unable to be embodied in *real* action on things, these divisions necessarily took the ideological form of a radicalization of positions of principle. But it is only fair to say that in this process a certain number of basic political problems were posed and that this resulted in profound divisions within the left movement.

The first serious break occurred at the time of the 1969 presidential campaign. While **Rouge*** didn't hesitate to present a candidate, Alain Krivine, and the **AJS†** limited itself to supporting Duclos (the PC candidate), the other groups – maoist or anarchist – came out against the elections, which they recognized quite correctly as one of the classic weapons with which the bourgeoisie interests and involves the whole population in its affairs. From this fundamental division – and it should be emphasized that on this point the Leninist groups that came out against participation in the elections broke with a very important part of their master's doctrine – others had to follow.

All the little grouplets agreed on one point: that it was necessary to get out of the Faculties, the ghetto where they were supposed to be confined. "The march to the people" became the general slogan. But how to march? The march to the people requires some response on the part of the poeple. But today the "people" are still kept

* **Rouge** is the paper of the Ligue Communiste, one of the two most important Trotskyist groups. The Ligue Communiste succeeded to the **J.C.R** (Jeneusse Communiste Revolutionnaire) prohibited after May 1968. It advocates a "revolutionary line" in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. It amounts to an alliance with the left wing of the P.S.U. (Parti Socialist Unifie, a small social-democratic party with many tendencies) and also to defend a stronger class struggle in factories. Its principal leaders are Franck and A. Krivine. Krivine was arrested by the French police for his participation in May '68, but he was, nevertheless, one of the candidates in the elections for presidency in '69.

† The **A.J.S. (Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme)** succeeded to the F.E.R. (Federation des Etudiants Revolutionnaire) prohibited after May '68. This is the other important Trotskyist French group. More "rightest" than Rouge (in May '68 they did not participate in the barricades), these Trotskyists advocate an alliance with the traditional P.C. (Communist Party). Its main leaders are Lambert and P. Broue. Their paper is *Jeune Revolutionnaire*.

well in hand both by the PC (of which much is said) and by the Gaullists (whom people tend too much to forget). This is not to say that the people oppose neither the PC and CGT nor Gaullism, but that it does this only sporadically and temporarily, just for limited actions in concrete situations. From this point of view the class struggle has remained on a very low level compared with the pre-war period.

It is, however, undeniable that these limited actions take on a more violent, a more "wildcat" character than before. This undeniable state of affiars is not accidental: it results from the evolution of the capitalist system itself. Its reorganization, its increasing concentration, the necessary destruction of former loci of compromise (parliaments, etc.), farther developed integration, leave to the producers and the other layers of the population crushed by this evolution only the resource of brutal revolts which those in power can only repress by force. This was already happening before May 1968, which from this point of view can be seen as a point at which accumulated forces found necessary release. The workers no longer hesitate to go out on wildcats, to go beyond the pale set by the unions, to lock the bosses up in their offices; petty shopkeepers tackle the cops violently, truckers block the roads, etc., just as the students didn't hesitate to fight in May 1968.

The students reacted to this situation in two ways.

For those who followed the traditional schema, it was necessary to pursue the usual sorts of political actions: enter the trade unions to transform them and toughen them up, make alliances with parties of similar positions, etc. This approach met some people's needs. This explains the relative success of this type of leftism in certain workplaces, as a certain radicalization of the bread-and-butter struggle got under way.

For others, the creation of a new union, pure and tough, was or is necessary. But attempts in this direction didn't (and can't) get anywhere. If you're going in for union-building, thinks the average worker, mostly non-unionized anyway, you may as well keep the old ones.

The other group started from an analysis of the union in action, or rather of its negative role. These comrades have practically stopped talking about the "treason" of the trade unions, and see them as tied to the capitalist system and thus as instruments of integration. Let us note that in these analyses the other side of the dialectical story is missing. It is necessary to pick out in what respects the unions remain useful to the working class in its daily life. Otherwise the analysis of the real role of the unions vis-a-vis capital is incomplete, making it impossible to understand the attitude of the workers and the facility with which the unions co-opt every wildcat movement by legally consecrating the gains they win.

The recognition of the unions' negative role in the revolutionary struggle and of the uselessness of wishing to transform or make use of them, has constituted a second division among the politicized students. We should stress that the refusal to participate in union activity signifies for the Leninist groups which have adopted it another fundamental break with the teaching of their master. An analogous break with old forms of thought occurred in the case of the anarchists who were forced to recognize that anarcho-syndicalism no longer has any meaning.

The rejection of trade union activity completed the rupture between "legal" (or better, institutional) leftism and the other kind. This was a definitive development, whatever the positions taken on violence itself.

II

The problem of violence has always held a veritable fascination for the intellectuals of the developed nations. The word *action* tends to have meaning for them only when coupled with the adjective *violent*, and "violent action" means fighting the police, brutality, etc. After May 1968, when streetfights played a not negligable role in opening things up, many people came to think of violence as an end in itself. Instead of seeing in the brutal violence which goes on today the expression of the need of groups (students, shopkeepers, even workers) to make their voices heard in the system, they see it as pure action against the system. This Sorelian point of view leads very quickly to the greatest of political confusions: that of defending in the name of violence alliances between classes and social strata whose roles in the capitalist system are at the very least disparate.*

On this question a new division within the movement takes shape , one which ought to lead to a conception of revolutionary violence more profound than that of violence as

* It is this fundamentally unthinking position with regard to violence which explains how the Gauche Proletarienne (a Maoist group, recently suppressed, inclined toward terroristic activity) and other Maoist groups advocate monstrous couplings between workers and shopkeepers, simply because they express their – quite different – problems within the system through violence.

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.
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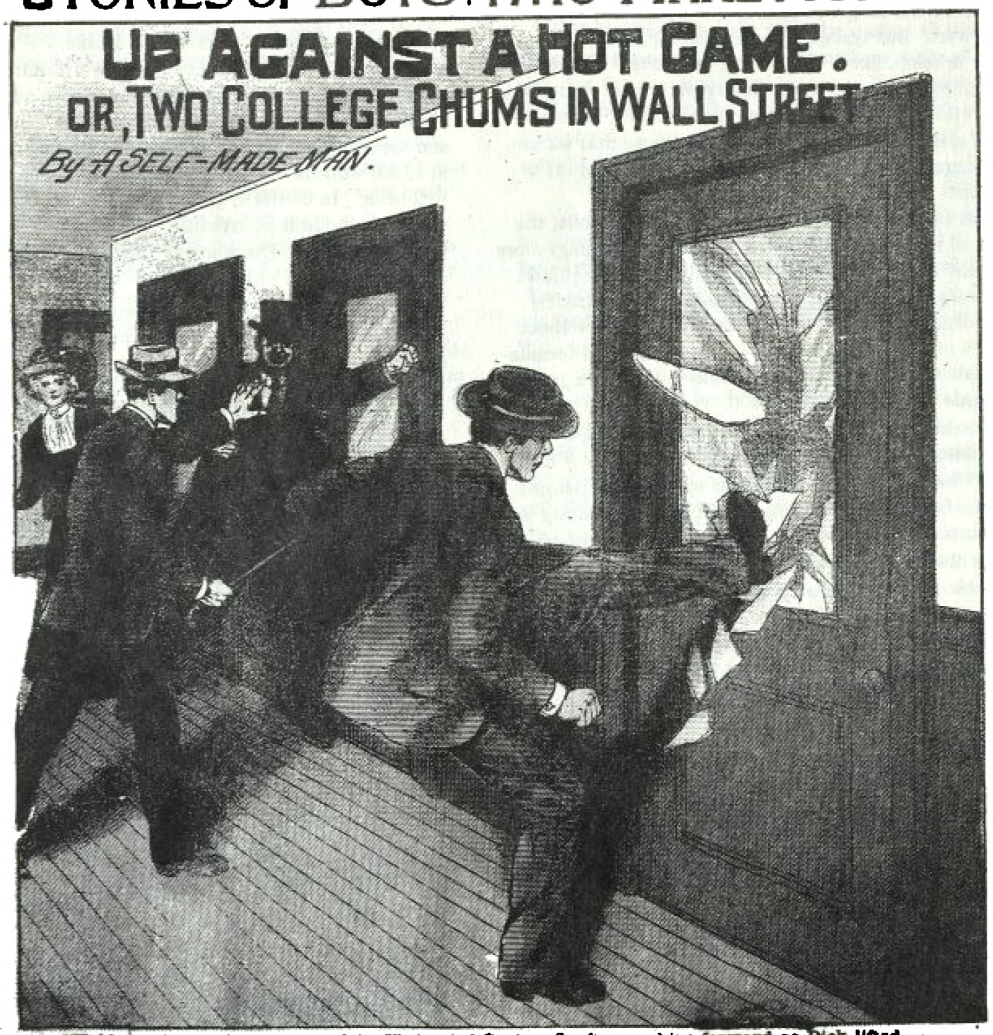
OR, TWO COLLEGE CHUMS IN WALL STREET

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"Hold on, there, what are you doing?" shouted Broker Grafton, rushing forward as Dick lifted his foot and struck the glass a blow that shivered it into fragments. Tom stepped between his chum and the irate broker.

an end in itself. It is this point that I wish to develop in what follows.

It is a banality to say that bourgeois society exudes brutal violence from all its pores. Not only does violence appear, exalted or attacked, at all levels of culture, but it can be found in everyday life, where it has become so habitual that it appears normal. The pool of blood is part of the decor of daily life. Car accidents and industrial accidents, veritable assassinations, are naturally assimilated with destiny, meet only with general indifference, and reveal themselves objectively as media for the emergence of a violence which is always there in latent form. Not to speak of past wars, the remembrance of which continues to mark generations, memories – and also perspectives – which vivify the images of massacre and genocide of the present wars. But against this conditioning to bourgeois violence develop, like a by-product, reactions – individual or collective – opposed to the bourgeois world: terrorism, strikes, wild demonstrations, even insurrections. The multiplicity and diversity of these reactions prove that we are dealing here with inevitable phenomena, and the truth of the slogan: we are right to rebel.

But faced with the inevitability of these revolts, the attitude of many comrades is not to investigate things more deeply but to echo Chairman Mao's phrase, "Power flows from the barrel of a gun." Out of this they construct a regular theory of urban guerrilla warfare in the developed countries of which the least one can say is that its foundation is not very sure. This theory only illustrates a romantic attitude to violence.

For the largest group of these comrades, the Gauche Proletarienne, the armed struggle begins tomorrow if not today. Whence the GP's commando operations, attempts to stir up factories by breaking into them and painting slogans, beating up foremen, etc., the proclamations of triumph in their newspaper, *La Cause du Peuple*. It is quite remarkable that the GP has produced no real theoretical position, no definition of the ends sought. One could say that from this point of view they join the revisionists (the real ones, from pre-1914) who said with Bernstein: the end is nothing, the movement everything.

The GP is undeniably attractive to everyone, anarchists and council communists included. All of us who are intellectuals admire the well struck blow, the exhibition of cool in the face of repression, self-sacrifice, etc. The intellectual trades do not predispose to moral courage – quite the contrary. So everyone is attracted to "heavies", and feels ready to accord them a political OK, as if physical courage was in itself a proof of political truth. On this ground one would have to support the Nazis and the fascists, or the bolsheviks who were undeniably heavies in the good old days.

On this point there ought to be a new break. For a certain number of comrades the analysis of the GP is erroneous. It is not that they question the phrase "power flows from the barrel of a gun" but simply that they feel that the times have not yet reached this point. In taking this position they are thrown towards those of us who think that armed struggle, while it will someday be inevitable, is not the essence of revolutionary violence.

It is thus necessary to pose the question, what is revolutionary violence? The way in which we answer this question strongly determines the style of actions which we wish to carry out.

Revolutionary violence is in essence the opposition of the class of producers to the bourgeois class, the class which, individually or collectively)*, controls the means of production. This violence must culminate in the *dispossession of the bourgeois class and the appropriation of the means of production by the producers themselves.*

From this way of looking at revolutionary violence, control of the pace of work by the workers – as has been attempted in certain cases in Italy – is a hundred times more violent than any fight with the riot squad, quite simply because it transcends bourgeois economic rationality and looks beyond society as it exists to a new social order in which work is organized by the workers for their own well-being. In contrast, guerrilla warfare, riots, etc. remain within the bounds of rationality as defined by the system, since they do not attack in any direct way capital's control of the production process.

In general, every attempt, however weak, to organize production *by and for* ourselves is more violent than any destroying a machine or taking a boss prisoner. It is obvious that this organization of production by and for ourselves cannot do without holding bosses captive or eventually armed struggle, but the kind of revolutionary struggle we carry out depends essentially on the aspect – armed struggle or control of production – we wish to emphasize.

If we stress armed struggle, if we see social transformation in terms of a simple "seizure of power", then the old Leninist arguments are irrefutable. The bourgeoisie meets the class of producers in motion with a united front and a unified command, and we must oppose it with our own united front. Faced with the bourgeois strategies we must develop strategies "of the people," and as making war, even guerrilla war , is an operation demanding constant decision-making, we must set up a commanding group which is to decide everything and which is called to account, if at all, only in the course of more or less cultural revolutions.

This short analysis brings out the ultra-leninist character, in its consequences on the plane of organization, of the phrase, "power flows from the barrel of a gun." More, one sees clearly its bourgeois and even quasi-fascist and stalinist character, which leads straight to the cult of the leader, respect for his decisions, obedience *perinde ac cadaver*, even to his thought.

This position, which maintains one of the fundamen-

)* Individually, in part, in Western capitalism, collectively in the state capitalism of the so-called socialist states.

tal distinctions of the bourgeois order, that between leaders and led, is particularly adapted to the backward countries where national capital has yet to be formed. It has shown its efficacity in the Russia of 1917, and in the China 1946. In both cases it made possible the installation of state capitalism, which it prefigured in its division between those who know and think and those who carry out orders. It must however be noted that in both cases the ruling system had been shaken by a war with an external enemy (Germany in the case of Russia, Japan in that of China) leading to a collapse of the state apparatus. The other countries in which the gun succeeded in beating the power structure are certain former French colonies and Cuba. But even in these cases, the guerrilla victories cannot be attributed simply to the success of armed struggle. In Cuba Castro's action benefited, at least in an early stage, from the aid or tacit accord of a certain fringe of American capital. In the case of the French colonies, the necessary decolonization – i.e., change in the mode of exploiting one or another backward country – could not take the form which it took (for example) in the English colonies because of the imbecility of the French bourgeoisie, always loath to lose a little in the short run to gain more in the long. In both Indochina and Algeria the French occupation was torn to bits, faced with insurrection (undeniably more serious and farther developed in the former case), caught between the desire to leave and the desire to crush the revolt at its base like in the good old days. In both cases outside aid (Japanese, American, Nationalist Chinese, then Russian and Communist Chinese for VN, American and Russian for Algeria) was not without its influence on the evolution of these conflicts, which took on the character of rivalried between different capitalist states and economic interests. On the other hand, the OAS, a guerrilla movement undeniably "of the people" and like a fish in the water of the European population in North Africa, was bound to lose as soon as the French ruling class, strong and not in a state of collapse, made its choice and decided to impose it.

"Unquestioning submission to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of labour processes that are based on large scale machinery... The Revolution demands, in the interests of Socialism, that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process." (Lenin *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*)

The theory of "power from the barrel of a gun" works, therefore, at best in the underdeveloped countries because – by its resemblance to the hierarchical system, by the facts that armed struggle allows the formation of the cadres or administrators of the future society and that guerrilla warfare allows the combination of a "democratization" at the local level with a centralization at the general level – it is adapted to the transformation of feudal society into state capitalism, to the replacement of the old ruling classes by new ones.

These few lines only skim the surface of this subject. We must return to it at greater length on some other occasion, for the clarification of ideas and the determination of differences between the Leninist groups and the others necessitates a critique of the Russian, Chinese, and Cuban regimes.

To return to the developed countries – developed, that is, from the viewpoint of national capital. If we see in physical violence and in the eventual armed struggle a by-product of the more profound violence which is the class struggle for the expropriation of the bourgeois class, we have quite a different position with respect to the immediate and future situation.

We see, to begin with, that *change in the way the producers think* is fundamental and that the role of any revolutionary "organization" is to do everything possible to aid this change. Without doubt it is essentially in their struggles that the producers acquire new ways of thinking, and it is vain to hope to "produce" such a change, especially when the "objective", material conditions are lacking. Still the role, negative or positive, of ideology in the development of consciousness is not negligable. To spread the word on the real struggles of the producers, to show in what way they break with bourgeois tradition, to underline *that in them which presages a new organization of society* – this must be the work of a group if it wishes to be really revolutionary. It is not a matter of constituting oneself as an avant-guarde in exclusive possession of the truth and trying to impose it on the producers, but, simply, of becoming an echo of the totality of the thinking and practice of the group's members, thinking and practice which *themselves also* are part of the class struggle. Spreading ideas does not mean using only "peaceful" means, or simply theoretical articles. Sometimes a well-timed action can play an important role in raising consciousness, even a very important role. (For example, the theft and distribution of 30,000 subway tickets by the GP may help people understand the absurdity of the urban transport system, etc.) What is essential, however, is to keep in mind that our actions, our positions, are only a little part of the social process, and for the most part are important only for our-

selves. This is why it is essential not to get locked into one type of action, into one organizational form, or into one-upping other groups.

III

This leads us to the question of "revolutionary action". To deal with this seriously we must distinguish certain characteristics of the producers' movement for the control of social reality, characteristics which depend on the development of the struggle.

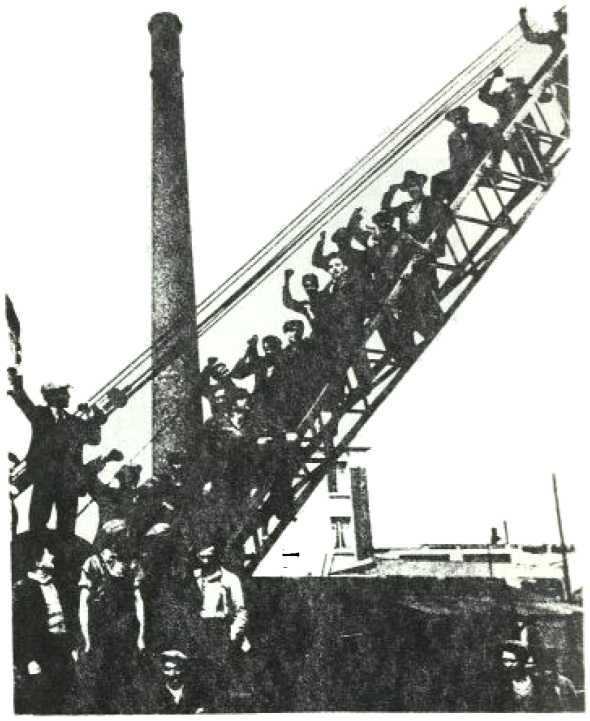
In fact – to adopt a "triadic" mode, reasoning in the Maoist style – we can distinguish three phases in the revolutionary process, three phases which cover many years – for the revolution itself, while it is an acceleration and a qualitative transformation of history, cannot be reduced to some great day, even the longest of the year. These three phases correspond to three different levels of development.

(a) In the first phase, the producer understands that he/she is exploited. This consciousness is now reached by everyone. Nearly always the producer sees that he/she is exploited even if the factors of integration push him/her to forget it and if – as is mostly the case – he/she finds this exploitation normal and seeks only to enter the group of exploiters.

(b) In a second phase, the producer understands that he/she is exploited in common with other producers, that is to say, that he/she is part of an exploited class facing an exploiting class. This second phase of consciousness exists at the moment in a latent state. Most often it is masked by trade union and (in France) Stalinist phraseology. It speeds up and becomes manifest in *collective* struggles, strikes, riots, etc., in which the solidarity of the producers in the face of the common enemy begins to assert itself.

(c) Finally, in the third phase, the producer understands that with his/her class he/she can transform society and suppress exploitation. This last phase (which can occur only in the developed countries for simple "objective", material reasons) is by far the most difficult and in fact, historically, has never been reached. At most we have taken part in a few weak steps in this direction. In fact this task is a formidable one, not only in view of the counter-revolution it threatens to unleash, but also and above all *because capitalist society has reached such a degree of complexity that it may appear impossible to master it by and for ourselves.*

It is besides symptomatic and normal that while political groups and political theories exist corresponding to stages (a) and (b), those corresponding to the last phase don't exist, or barely do. The theories which we have only serve up again, with a sauce more or less reheated and spiced up, the social-democratic ideas left over from the last century, according to which the transformation of society will take the form of a "seizure of power" by "labor" organizations of the union or party variety. Far from posing the formidable problems raised by the possibility of the direction of production by "associated, free, and equal producers," by the domination of work by humanity, by the necessary appropriation of technical skills by the mass of producers for their own use, by the transmission of knowledge, most of the "thinkers" limit themselves to contemplating or patching up the old fashions. For the most part they find that the socialist society will be realized as soon as competent people are in charge, especially if we are careful to make a little cultural revolution from time to time, which will put the really competent people in their rightful place. A fringe group revives the old myth of the "noble savage", the isolated producer reconciled with his/her work and producing for his/her own needs. Others think in terms of the total abolition of labor, which becomes unnecessary thanks to the development (by whom?) of an imaginary automation, an idea which in reality is equivalent to extolling a return to the stone age. Others, finally, are partisans of the "workers councils", the content of which is never made clear, and which is their *Deus ex machina*, like the party or "democracy" for others.



Sit-down strike, Paris 1936

Without a doubt, as the first historical experiences show, the "council" form seems to be the one which will insure production and distribution in the new society, which will permit the development of the solidarity of all the producers and the realization of the satisfication of the egoism of each in the satisfaction of the egoism of all. But one cannot escape the problem of how they are to be federated and coordinated. The only attempt at a theoretical solution of this problem is the book of the Dutch comrades: *Grundprinzipien Kommunistischer Production und Verteilung*, but this leaves the theory at an embryonic level, as does Pannekoek's *Workers Councils***.

Since a solution of this problem– or even a sketch of one– doesn't exist, one cannot be surprised if the most conscious militants, who are unwilling to remain at stages (a) and (b), are caught up in a sort of shit, not knowing what to do. The activity of any revolutionary group demands theoretical reflection. The absence of this reflection matches the weakness of the basic class struggle.

This theoretical work ought to take many forms, because the task to be accomplished is immense and has as many forms as life. It is for this reason that it is essential that there be thousands and thousands of autonomous groups all over the place, dealing seriously with the problems of theoretical and practical work. What we need is as much theory and as many actions as possible– far from the one correct political line dear to all Leninists (real or disguised), which is the spitting image of bourgeois sclerosis and death. This does not imply scattering the struggle– much to the contrary– but an attempt to deal with social realities, and the recognition that the transformation of society will be the work not of some one political group but of the mass of producers themselves, because the basic struggle goes on at the workplace.

There is no need for groups to have a form determined in advance, to copy a specific model, to exist for eternity. Dissolutions, recombinations, reamalagations, fusions, clusters, etc. ought to go on. All of this is the condition of progress, as is the confrontation of ideas and experience, as is the action of each group or of each individual, as is also the collective actions and reflections of different groups or individuals. This is what went on during the revolutionary periods in Russia, Germany, and Spain (and even in China during certain phases of the cultural revolution), when real social ferment could be seen in the flowering of autonomous groups.

The problem of "political organization" cannot be posed *a priori*. It must take many forms; there is no need to set up guidelines. What is important is not to set up fetishes, to remain modest and to see oneself as a part, *no more and no less* essential than others in the development of revolutionary society, to be aware that if one transcends bourgeois society on certain points one remains still determined by it on many others, to seek as far as possible for actions which above all try to develop class consciousness and one's own consciousness at the same time, to support the the autonomous action of the masses. By the development of our consciousness we can participate in the development of the struggle at our workplaces with our fellow producers. No place in society is privileged– neither the university nor the factory. The struggle against bourgeois society must go on at all levels.

"We are not lost and we will win if we have not unlearned how to learn."

Reprinted from **ICO (Informations Correspondance Ouvrieres)**

The body of Rosa Luxemburg, dragged from a canal in March 1919, three weeks after her murder. The reality-principle is not quite over...

**) Parts 1 and 2 were published as *Root and Branch Pamphlet 1* ($1).

The American Economy: Crisis and Policy

Since capitalist economic policy must make no mention of the exploitation relations underlying the capitalist mode of production, economists and politicians must seek "solutions" to economic problems in terms of market phenomena. It all seems quite simple. The periodic shortage of profit which results from the laws of capitalist development appears on the market as a lack of demand, which hinders the expansion of production and so of new investments. When this state of affairs takes on a protracted character, the state jumps in to increase demand through public spending.

This indeed revives production, but has no effect on the profit situation itself. Goods produced in the "public" sector are paid for by the government with funds taxed or borrowed from the private sector; so that what appear as new profits for the businesses with government contracts are subtracted from the profits already realized on the private market by other businesses. * Nevertheless, the economists measure capitalist "progress" by the increase of production as a whole, lumping together profitable and unprofitable production. Although only the profitable part of production makes possible the accumulation of additional capital, growing total production simulates the conditions of a general upswing. The conditions experienced since the second world wai can thus be celebrated as a boom, and taken as proof that capitalism has succeeded in abolishing the crisis cycle through state interventions in the economy.

This optimism was to an extent borne out by the facts, thanks to a rapid rise in the productivity of labor resulting from the extended application of science to technique during and after the war. However, unprofitable production has grown more quickly than profitable. The diversion of profits to the former has led to a further decline in accumulation, and the "solution" to this problem is now in turn sought in a restriction of public expenditures. The increased production based on governmental deficit financing which is, on the one hand, held to be a solution to crisis, is on the other , also held responsible for a continuing crisis situation, perceived in the form of growing inflation.

* This is obviously the briefest form possible of a fairly controversial argument. For a detailed exposition of the latter, see Paul Mattick's *Marx and Keynes* , Boston (Porter Sargent): 1969. – *The Editors*

The bourgeois economists cannot understand their own economy. Just as they see insufficient demand as the cause of stagnation, they see inflation as the result of an increased demand, effected by the state-induced production, meeting a supply which ostensibly has not grown. Prices rise, it is said, because too much money seeks too few goods. It follows that a decline in demand through the restriction of public spending will end the inflation, if at the cost of growing unemployment. If public spending cannot be reduced, demand for new private capital must be diminished through higher interest rates, which also brings unemployment. Nothing can be done about this. For under today's conditions there is only the choice between inflation and unemployment. To be sure a market equilibrium could be produced through a general reduction of wages and a further increase in labor productivity. But this solution is blocked by the wages policy of the trade unions and the prices policy of the monopolies; such a solution would require bringing prices and wages under government control.

The facts, however, contradict such explanations. That prices are not determined by impossibly high labor costs is shown by the fact that despite increasing productivity workers' real wages have not risen since 1967. That the problem is not one of an excessive demand is implicit in the fact that almost a fourth of American productive capacity lies unused. (If more goods aren't produced it's because they couldn't be profitably sold.) Supply has *exceeded* Demand and nevertheless prices have risen yearly by around 7.2%. The deflationist policy of the last two years has not affected this situation in the least, though hope springs eternal that it will slow the tempo of inflation. In reality supply and demand have nothing to do with the inflation, just as monopolistic price and wage policies are not causes of the inflation but its results.

Inflation and deflation have always been forced on capital as means by which workers' wages may be adjusted to meet profit requirements. The capitalist ideal is stability; this, however, comes into conflict with the necessities of accumulation, so that capitalism develops through a crisis cycle. Up to the second world war capitalist crises were principally characterized by deflation: production would be curtailed, workers fired, wages cut, capital values destroyed, and prices lowered. Through this process of decline and ruin a new balance would be struck between the profit requirements of the surviving (and now more highly concentrated) capital and the actual production. The in-

creasing intensity of these crises led to attempts to neutralize them by means of inflation. With inflation, prices can be made to rise faster than wages. This reduces labor's share of the social product and so augments profits and furthers capital accumulation.

With the growth of the public sector inflation acquires another role: as the means by which the non-profitable character of government-induced production finds partial compensation in higher prices for goods produced in the private sector. The unproductive expenditures of the state are financed in part through loans and in part through taxes. The government money- and credit-expansion in itself implies rising commodity prices and the depreciation of money. As the capitalists see it, lack of profit derives on the one hand from existing wage levels and on the other from the imposition of taxes on capital. The burden of unprofitable on profitable production, then, appears to the individual capitalist as a decrease in his earnings, which he seeks to offset by raising his prices. What is really happening is that total production is growing faster than total profit; this shows up in the fall of the average rate of profit. Under these conditions, a monopolistic price policy secures the needed profit at the expense of competetive capitals. (Its ability to do this must however disappear in the course of time as total profits continue to shrink.) The workers, finally, only try to adjust their wages to the higher prices.

If private capital does not succeed in outstripping the expansion of the unprofitable state sector through a relatively faster private capital accumulation, then what lies behind the continuing inflationary trend is the slow decline of the profit-oriented market economy. In the absence of an accelerated capital accumulation, a renewed deflation seems required as the basis for a new prosperity. The novelty of the present situation lies in the fact that deflation and inflation are being applied at the same time. Higher prices accompany diminishing production, the appearance of prosperity that of crisis. This double attack on the existing wage and working conditions expresses American capital's need for accelerated accumulation within its own borders and in the framework of the world economy. The sharpened international competition, including the imperialist policy, requires as basis the greater exploitation of workers in this country.

Since the capitalist state is not to compete in the market with the private capitalists it serves, its contribution to production must take the form of public spending which is useful to capital. This means first of all paying the expenses of imperialist power politics, which works in the best interests of private capital. The costs involved can be considered a kind of "social investment", which may open up new profit possibilities or keep existing ones safe. It must be remembered that America has through two world wars become the strongest imperialist power. American capital has to a great extent replaced European capital in Canada and South America, made large investments in nearly all European countries, and brought colonies formerly under European control under its own. The oil of the Middle East is now for the most part in American hands, and in SE Asia American capital is trying to win supremacy over this area of great promise. Without imperialist competition America would not have become what it is today. Capital's need to expand makes imperialism as necessary as it is desirous, and the power already won determines the degree of imperialist aggressiveness.

PROBLEMS OF IMPERIALISM

To be sure, the imperialist policy contains its own contradictions, which in the end can be traced back to those of capitalist production. While imperialism is a necessity, it is also a danger which can lead to deeper economic disorder. Public spending can somehow be controlled within a national framework; this is no longer possible in the case of war, since the enemy has a share in the decision-making. In the great wars of the past everything, so to speak, was at stake; they ended after a couple of years with the destruction of one side and the victory of the other, permitting rearrangements of international economic and political power. In the era of the atomic bomb, however, the imperialist powers themselves draw back in fright from such a war, with the result that their actual war activities threaten to take on a permanent character, and therefore yield no visible fruits. The American war in Indochina has led to the disappointment of imperialist expectations. Instead of creating possibilities for further expansion it has only deepened the difficulties of profit production and has enlarged public expenditures.

Since the individual corporations do not participate equally in the state-controlled production, one part of capital subsidizes another part. The capitals which do not profit from the war turn, if not on ideological then on economic grounds, against the apparently unsuccessful war policy. Since the war involves continuing inflation, a part of the middle class has also lost interest in it. The workers have up to now been the least opposed to it, perhaps since many fear that their jobs depend on war and armaments. Obviously opposition to or acceptance of the war are not determined only by economic motives, but such considerations are bound to give one attitude or the other particularly expressive force. At any rate a growing war-weariness is developing which under certain circumstances can be dangerous for the imperialist policy.

It would however be incorrect to trace America's economic difficulties exclusively back to the war in Indochina. They are due, as pointed out above, to a tendency to crisis inherent in the capitalist mode of production and relatively independent of this war. The success achieved through the Second World War is already a

thing of the past. The capital increased through this success now requires a correspondingly greater mass of profit in order to continue to expand at the same tempo. Thus yesterday's success itself becomes tomorrow's obstacle. When the mass of profit adequate to the expansion of the existing capital can no longer be obtained expansion transforms itself into stagnation. That the gains made through the World War and its aftermath are not sufficient to solve the accumulation problem of American capital is visible in the very fact that it has been necessary throughout the whole post-war period to ward off unemployment through growing public expenditures.

Since the capitalist economy is not centrally coordinated, it is naturally unable to frame policies to control its development: to decide at one time on a rising and at another on a declining state of business. Rather, production expands when profits grow, and contracts when profits shrink. When we speak of economic policy we refer only to measures taken by the state to influence the economy in one direction or another, within the limits imposed by the cyclical nature of capitalist development. The state can use the tax system, state credit, and control of the money supply to affect business conditions. Through thescarcity of money and the rise in the interest rate that goes with it production and investments are slowed down. The same end is accomplished through the raising of direct or indirect taxes on capital. With the limitation of production in general, the profitability of weaker capital is especially lowered, and the resulting restrictions in business activity and bankruptcies produce unemployment which is no longer absorbed by additional public expenditure. The final aim of the whole process is also the primary goal of all capitalist production, namely the increase of profits, in order to achieve a new prosperity on the basis of a changed capital structure.

The deflationary course introduced by the Nixon administration was in this regard successful. According to Arthur F. Burns, head of the Federal Reserve System,

> Reductions in employment have occured among all classes of workers – blue collar, white collar, and professional workers alike. Indeed, employment of so-called non-production workers in manufacturing has shown a decline since March that is unparalleled in the post-war period.
>
> Because of these vigorous efforts to cut costs, the growth of productivity has resumed, after two years of stagnation. In the second quarter of this year, output per manhour in the private nonfarm economy rose at a 4 per cent annual rate, and the rate advanced to 5 per cent in the third quarter. These productivity gains have served as a sharp brake on the rise in unit labor costs, despite rapid increases in wage rates. [*New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1970]

Although it has escaped this expert that real wages already ceased to rise since 1967, it cannot be doubted that unemployment, which according to offical data affected 6% of all wage workers at the end of 1970, made possible greater exploitation and lowered production costs. But this cost-cutting has had little effect on the continuing rise in prices.

Nixon's policy was thus a "disappointment" while it indeed slowed the pace of the economy, it did not end inflation. Inflation without unemployment, it is now said, has only given way to inflation with unemployment. But capital must make profits in all situations, and that of inflation with unemployment suits it well. Soloman Fabricant, another expert, drew these conclusions:

> In fact, to have maintained an inflationary policy in 1969 would, I believe, have postponed the recession only at the cost of a far worse recession later, when the rate of inflation

THE ECONOMY:

The Reality Principle is no longer at work.

had accelerated to an altogether intolerable level. [*New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1970]

The interruption of the inflationary trend appears to be not only a national but also an international necessity, since the American situation is closely bound to that of the world economy. The dollar is a reserve currency. On its stability hangs that of the international currency system, and so that of the world market. International agreements set the relations of other currencies to the dollar, which itself is – at least theoretically– based on a fixed gold price. During the last ten years, the buying power of the dollar has fallen by more than one fourth. With this the dollar reserves of other countries have also depreciated, and the preference for exchanging dollars for gold has risen. The constantly increasing loss of its gold backing makes the dollar continually more problematic as world money and reserve currency, and with it the world's money system.

Thus, while the depreciation of the dollar makes for higher profitability in so far as prices rise faster than wages, it tends to undermine the existing international money system, which rests on the parity of the dollar with other currencies. A greater efficiency in international competition has up to now granted American capital a positive balance of trade, which however has been accompanied by a negative balance of payments because of great capital exports and the war in Indochina. The dollars spent by the government found their way abroad, since profits promised to be greater there than in America, and an increasing part of the world economy was brought under the control of American exploitation. The acceleration of international economic activity was thus in part tied to America's inflationary policy and for a long time met with no serious opposition. But with the increasing competitive capability of European and Japanese capital, these countries turned against the American capital export advanced by inflationary means. It is not to be expected that these countries will forever submit their own capitalist interests to the inflationary necessities of America, just in order to preserve the dollar standard.

At all events, the accelerating inflation, national and international, appears to slip from the control of the American regime and to harm capital more than profit it. In addition to de- and re-evaluations of other currencies, it has forced an international inflation. This has undermined the international areements reached anyway only with difficulty, and points to a general financial crises.* In addition the rapidly climbing dollar prices decrease the international competitive ability of American capital and its commodity exports have fallen in relationship to imports. Between 1962 and 1968 American exports grew from $21.4 billion to $34.2 billion. In the same period however, imports climbed from 16.4 to 32.4 billion dollars , so that the positive balance of trade was rapidly disappearing. That it still exists to a small degree is due not to the commodity exchange between Europe and America but to that between America and the underdeveloped countries. With the disappearance of the trade surplus, the pressure is on the payments balance through greater capital exports and the costs of imperialism continued to grow, and thus contributed to the decision to halt the inflationary trend.

This decision came the more easily as the war situations in Indochina and in the Middle East had seemingly lost much of their menace, allowing America to stabilize the costs involved. The temporary limitation of capital exports poses no great problems for the capital already invested, since the latter can now make use of a newly developed European capital market to find funds for further growth. An artifical reserve forced on the International Monetary Fund, the so-called Paper Gold, serves as backup to the American gold reserves, and resumed European capital exports to America aid the payments balance. In the breathing space produced by this conjunction of factors it appeared quite possible to brake the inflation. The social consequences – such as unemployment – will be put up with as a necessary price to pay in order to push forward from the inflationary to a more stable form of capital production.

PRODUCTION GOES DOWN

This appears to be an illusion. Indeed, total production fell in 1970 for the first time since 1958 – but without change in the price level. By the end of the year there were 5 million unemployed and nearly 15 million on welfare. Every week around 300 firms and more than 3,000 independent businessmen declare bankruptcy. The increasing productivity of labor has certainly improved profitability, but not by enough to make new investments attractive. Orders in the machine tool industry are lower today than they have been for twelve years. The "calculated" reduction of economic activity has turned into a general decline, the social consequences of which cannot be foreseen. The Nixon administration's first response was an attempt to push the economy up again by means of a greater reduction of taxes on capital, and a lowering of the interest rate; but it was quickly compelled to return to the inflationary tactics of the past. For 1971 a deficit of between 15 and 20 billion dollars and a corresponding expansion of the money supply is foreseen in order to return to full employment.

To be sure, "full employment" is defined as allowing up to 4% unemployment. But in order to do justice even to this definition, according to economic experts, yearly production must climb by 6% in real values. But in view of the decline in production at the year's end, even this 6% growth rate – itself unrealistic – would not suffice to produce full employment, and this the less so as, in so far as planned new investments are known, all industries are striving to lower their investments for 1971 by between 5% and 9%. The unemployed will not find jobs in the pri-

* This was written before the dollar crisis of May, 1971 – *The Editors.*

vate sector of the economy, so that the full employment program can be realised only through a new wave of inflation (i.e., government-induced production).

Inflation, war, and unemployment lead to a general dissatisfaction which makes itself felt not only politically but also in the demoralization of the army. The return of part of the troops from Indochina is traceable not only to the desire to stabilize military expenditures but also to the growing unreliability of the soldiers stationed in Vietnam. Of course it is made possible only by the apparent inability of North Vietnam and the NLF to carry on the war on an expanding scale. The return of the troops, and the implied promise of a full withdrawal from Vietnam, awakened new illusions and brought the American antiwar movement, at the end of 1970, to a nearly full halt. In addition, the student movement, which focused its opposition nearly exclusively on American imperialism, without much concern with the capitalist system itself, became a victim of its own programmatic limitations and its present inability to have any real influence over the pace of events. Through the interventions into Cambodia and Laos it received a new impetus, which however lagged behind the activity developed earlier.

The economic and political difficulties of American capital should not be overestimated. In general, the discontented are opposed not to the capitalist system but only to the policy of the present administration. Likewise, the Nixon administration is concerned not so much about the breakdown of capitalism as about its own continued existence, and constructs its policy, insofar as this is objectively possible, with an eye to the coming election. To be sure, this viewpoint is possible only with respect to domestic issues, but here it is quite feasible to increase total production and lower unemployment, if at the cost of greater governmental indebtedness. The resulting impairment of capitalist accumulation can not yet upset the system itself, since the sphere of state-induced waste production in the totality of production is still relatively small.

Control over foreign policy does not, however, rest in America's hands alone. Without doubt the Nixon regime would welcome an end to the war on America's terms, particularly as a situation critical for American capital is beginning to develop in South America, and as the situation in the Middle East has not lost its explosiveness. The invasions into Cambodia and Laos show that for America the war in Indochina can end only with the defeat of the NLF and North Vietnam, i.e., with the end of the attempt to unite South and North Vietnam. It depends on the behavior of Russia and China, whether US military dominance of S.E. Asia will be followed by the consolidation of American power in that area. As things stand, the renewed inflationary trend coincides with sharpened imperialist aggressiveness. Both phenomena can only drive the internal social contradictions to extremes, so that American capitalism is bound to continue in its long standing condition of social crisis.

Paul Mattick

Industrial Worker, October 5, 1951

america's war in indochina

The origins of the war in Indochina are to be found in the results of the second world war. Waged in Europe, Africa, and East Asia, World War II turned America into the strongest capitalist power in both the Atlantic and the Pacific areas of the world. The defeat of the imperialist ambitions of Germany and Japan promised the opening up of new imperialist opportunities for the United States, which emerged from the conflict not only unimpaired but enormously strengthened. America's opportunities were not limitless, however; concessions had to be made to the Russian war-time ally, which formed the basis for new imperialistic rivalries and for the ensuing "cold war." The post-war years were marked by the two great powers' attempts to consolidate their gains. This excluded further unilateral expansion that would destroy the new power relationships. To that end, America assisted in the reconstruction of the West European economies and the revival of their military capacities, as well as in the rebuilding of Japan under her tutelage.

The second world war provided an opportunity for the colonial and semi-colonial nations of East Asia to gain their political independence. The British , French, Dutch, and Japanese colonizers lost their possessions. At first, the national liberation movement was welcomed by the Americans as an aid in the struggle against Japan, just as at first the Japanese had supported this movement as a means to destroy the European colonizers. Even after the Japanese defeat, the United States displayed no serious intentions to help the European nations to regain their colonies. The Americans were fully convinced that they would inherit what their European allies had lost, if not in the political then in an economic sense.

The Chinese revolution altered the whole situation, particularly because at that time it appeared as an extension of the power of the new Russian adversary and as the expansion of a socio-economic system no longer susceptible to foreign exploitation through the ruling world market relations. The needs of the American imperialists were clear: short of war, they would have to contain China in Asia, as they contained Russia in Europe. This necessitated a system of Asian alliances such as the Atlantic Pact provided for Europe.

Capital is international. The fact that its historical development paralleled that of the nation state did not prevent the establishment of the capitalist world market. However, due to political interventions in defense of one national bourgeoisie against competitor nations, the concentration of capital was, and is, more difficult to achieve on an international than on a national scale. Even capitalist crises, world-embracing accelerators of the concentration process, needed the additional measures of imperialistic wars to extend the national concentration process to the international scene. The capitalistic organization of the world economy is thus a contradictory process. What it brings about is not the final accomplishment of capitalist world unity but capital entities competing more and more destructively for the control of always larger parts of the world economy.

This process is inherent in capital accumulation, which reproduces the fundamental capitalist contradictions on an always larger scale. With capital accumulation still the determining factor of social development, we re-experience more extensively and more intensely the experiences of the past with respect to both competition and the internationalization of capital. To regard the world as destined for private exploitation is what capitalism is all about. If, at the beginning, it was predominantly a question of exporting commodities and importing cheap raw materials, it soon turned into the export of capital for the direct exploitation of the labor power of other nations and therewith to colonization in order to monopolize the new profit sources.

The end of the colonial system did not remove the twofold capitalist need to expand internationally and to concentrate the profits thereby gained into the hands of the dominant national capital entities. Because capitalism is both national and international it is by its very nature imperialistic. Imperialism serves as the instrumentality for bridging national limitations in the face of pressing international needs. It is therefore silly to assume the possibility of a capitalism which is not imperialistic.

Of course, there are small capitalist nations which flourish without directly engaging in imperialistic activities. But such nations, operating within the frame of the capitalistic world market, partake, albeit indirectly, in the imperialistic exploits of the larger capitalist nations, just as -- on the domestic scale -- many small sub-contractors profit from business given to them by the large prime contractors producing for the war economy. Not all capitalist countries can expand imperialistically. They find themselves more or less under the control of those nations which can, even if this control is restricted to the economic sphere. It is for this reason that some European observers see a form of neo-colonialism in the recent expansion of American capital in Europe, and others press for a more integrated Europe able to act as a "third force" in a

Iwo Jima, 1945

world dominated by imperialist powers.

The contradiction between the national form of capital and its need for expansion, which recognizes no boundaries, is intertwined with the contradiction between its competitive nature and its urge for monopolization. In theory, a competitive economy flourishes best in a free world market. Actually, however, competition leads to monopoly and monopolistic competition, and the free world market leads to protected markets monopolized by political means. Monopolistic competition implies imperialistic struggles to break existing monopolies in favor of new ones. The economic form of competition takes on political expressions and therefore ideological forms, which come to overshadow the economic pressures which are their source.

This transformation of economic into political-ideological issues has become still more confounded through the modifications of capital production brought about by way of social revolution. The planned economies of Russia, China, and their satellites not only disturbed the monopolistically controlled world market but tended to prevent its further expansion under private-capitalist auspices. To be sure, there was not much capitalization in the underdeveloped parts of the world. International capital concentration resulted in the rapid development of existing capital at the expense of potential capital in subjugated countries. Lucrative markets, and cheap foodstuffs and raw materials increased the profit rates in the manufacturing nations and therewith hastened their capital accumulation. Beyond that, however, it was expected that a time would come when further expansion of capital would include its intensified extension in the underdeveloped parts of the world.

Capital is not interested in the continued existence of industrially-underdeveloped nations *per se*. It is interested only to the extent that this state of affairs proves to be the most profitable. If a further development of backward countries should be more, or equally, profitable than investments in advanced nations, capitalists will not hesitate to foster their capitalist developement just as they hastened it in their own countries. Whether or not this could ever become a reality under the conditions of private-capital production is a question the capitalists cannot raise for their own continued existence is clearly bound up with the capitalization of the underdeveloped nations. They thus cannot help seeing in the formation and expansion of state-controlled systems a limitation of their own possibilities of expansion and a threat to their control of the world market. For them "communism" means the formation of super-monopolies which cannot be dealt with by way of monopolistic competition and have to be combatted by political-ideological means and, where opportune, by military measures.

In their opposition to "communism" the capitalists do not merely object to a different economic system. They also condemn it for political and ideological reasons especially since, convinced that the economic principles of capitalism are universal principles of economic behavior, their violation seems a violation of human nature itself. They do not and cannot afford to understand the dynamics and limitations of their own social system. They see the reasons for its difficulties not in the system itself but in causes external to it. From this point of view, it is the erroneous and depraved creed of communism which subverts society and robs it of the possibility of working itself out of whatever difficulties arise. It is thus not necessary that the capitalists, their apologists, and all the people who accept the capitalist ideology be aware of the fact that it is the ordinary business of profit-making which determines the national and international capitalist policies.

Neither is it necessary for the capitalist-decision-makers to comprehend all the implications of their activities in the def ense of and, therefore, the expansion of their economic and political powers. They know in a general way that whatever lies outside their control endangers their interests and perhaps their existence and they react almost "instinctively" to any danger to their privileged positions. Because they are the ruling class, they determine the ruling ideology, which suffices to explain their own behavior, as it covers their special class interests and nothing else. They will thus explain all their actions in strictly ideological terms, taking their economic content for granted and as something not debatable. Indeed, they may never make a conscious connection between their political convictions and their underlying economic considerations, and may inadvertently violate the latter in satisfying their ideological notions.

The capitalists are not Marxists, which is to say that they must defend, not criticise, existing social relationships. Defense does not require a proper understanding of the system; it merely demands actions which support the *status quo*. Marxist rationality, which includes criticism of existing conditions, often assumes that all capitalistic activities are directly determined by its capitalistic rationality, that is, by its immediate need to make profit and to accumulate capital. They will look for directly-observable economic motives behind the political activities of capitalist states, particularly in the international field. When such obvious reasons are not directly discernible, they are somewhat at a loss to account for imperialist aggression. In the case of Indochina, for example, the apparent absence of important economic incentives for American intervention has been a troublesome fact for Marxist war critics. This was seemingly mitigated only by the recent discovery of offshore oil potentials, which are supposed to explain, at least in part, the continued interest of big business in a victorious conclusion of the war. It is clear, however, that the Indochina war was there, and would bt there, without this discovery and explanations must be found other than some definite but isolated capitalistic interests.

The apologists of capitalism utilize this situation to demonstrate that it is not the capitalist system as such which leads to imperialism, but some aberration thrust upon it by forces external to itself. They speak of a "military-industrial complex," conspiring within the system, to serve its particularistic interests at the expense of society as a whole. In their views, it is one of the institutions of society, not capitalism itself, which is responsible for the war through it usurpation of the decision-making powers of government. Whereas the war – far from being waged for profits, current or expected – is an enormous expense to the American taxpayers and therefore senseless, it does directly benefit the particular group of war profiteers in control of government. Specific people, not the system, are to blame, for which reason all that is necessary to end the aberration is a change of government and the emasculation of the "industrial-military complex."

There is, of course, truth in both these assertions, namely, that imperialism is economically motivated and that it is spearheaded by groups particularly favored by war. But by failing to relate these explanations to the fundamental contradictions of capital production, they fail to do justice to the complexity of the problem of war and imperialism. Neither the production nor the accumulation of capital is a consciously-controlled process on the social level. Each capitalist entity, be it an entrepreneur, corporation, conglomerate, or multinational enterprise, necessarily limits its activities to the enlargement of its capital, without regard to or even the possibility of having regard for, social needs and the course of social development. They are blind to the national and international social consequences of their relentless need to enlarge their capital. The profit motive is their only motive. It is what determines the direction of their expansion. Their enormous weight within society determines social policies and therewith the policies of the government. This implies, however, that government and society itself operate just as blindly with respect to its development as each separate capital entity with regard to its profit needs. They know what they are doing, but not where it will lead them; they cannot comprehend the consequences of their activities.

These consequences may include war and war may be initiated not because of some definite economic expectations, such as possession of specific raw materials, entry into new markets, or the export of capital, but because of past economic policies whose consequences were not foreseeable. This is quite clear, of course, in the case of imperialistic interventions in defense of capitalist property which stands in danger of being expropriated, or has been expropriated, in nations which try to gain, or regain, some measure of independence in economic as well as in political terms. This explains recent interventions such as those in Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Congo and so forth. It is not clear with respect to the intervention in Indochina, where the United State's economic interests were minimal and their possible loss of no consequence to her economy. Yet this intervention, too, was the unforeseen outcome of past economic developments, even though it cannot be related to any immediate and specific economic needs or opportunity on the part of American capitalism.

There is only one way to secure the capitalist market economy and that is through the continuous expansion of capital. It is this expansion which is the secret of its prosperous stages of development, just as lack of expansion results in its periods of depression. Capital development has been an alternation between prosperity and depression, the so-called business-cycle. For American capital, however, the last big depression, that of 1929, did not lead to a new period of prosperity but to an era of relative stagnation and decline, which was overcome only through the transformation of the economy into a war economy, that is, the growth of production not by way of capital accumulation, but through the accumulation of the national debt and production for "pub-

lic consumption" such as is required by war and preparation for war. But just like the Great Depression before, the war failed to restore a rate of capital expansion sufficient to assure the full utilization of productive resources and the available labor power. The government saw itself forced to continue its support of the economy by way of deficit–financed public expenditures which, given the nature of the capitalist system, are necessarilynon-competitive with private capital and therefore largely arms expenditures. The "cold war" in the wake of the real war provided the rationale for this type of compensatory production.

To be sure, private capital continued its expansion at home and abroad, but not to the extent which would have allowed a significant curtailment of non-profitable government–induced production. Indeed, in spite of both types of production – that is, for the market and for extra-market "public consumption" – full employment and full use of productive resources could not be reached. Despite the great expenditures connected with the war in Indochina, at the end of 1970 America counted six million unemployed and an 80% utilization of her productive resources. War expenditures are, of course, a deduction from the national income and can neither be capitalized nor be consumed in the usual sense of the term. A steady growth of expenditures for war is possible only at the expense of capital accumulation and living standards. It is, therefore, no solution for the problems caused by an insufficient rate of capital expansion; instead it makes a solution harder to achieve. Capitalistically, war makes "sense" only if it serves as an instrument for bringing about conditions more favorable for a further expansion and extension of capital. Yet at the same time, under prevailing conditions, absence of the war in Indochina would merely increase the number of unemployed and increase the unused part of the productive resources.

War or no war, short of an accelerated rate of private capital expansion, there is only the choice between a deepening depression and the amelioration of conditions through the further extension of non-profitable "public" expenditures. But whereas the war may eventually yield the preconditions for an American penetration of East Asia, and its present expense be recompensed by future profits, public expenditures for other purposes do not have such effects. Experience shows that war does open up possibilities for further capital expansion. From a consistent capitalistic standpoint a successfully waged war is more "rational" than a steady drift into economic decline.

Even if the "mixed economy" has found acceptance as a probably unavoidable modification of the capitalist system, the "mix," that is, governmental interventions in the economy, are supposed to be only such as benefit private capital. To keep it that way, interferences in market relations must be limited on the national as well as on the international level. A general expansion of government production internally would spell the certain end of corporate capitalist property relations, just as the extension of a state-determined social system of production within the world economy points toward the contraction of the free-enterprise economies. The necessity of containing the spread of "communism," that is, of state-controlled systems, is thus related to the necessity of restricting governmental interventions in the economy within each private-capitalist nation. With more nations adopting the state-controlled form of capital production and thereby limiting the expansion of private capital, insufficient expansion of the latter calls forth more intensive government interventions in the private-capitalist nations. To halt the trend toward state-capitalism in the market economies requires the containment and possibly the "roll-back" of the already-established state-capitalist systems. But while at home the capitalists control their governments and thus determine the kind and degree of the latter's economic interventions, they can only halt the dreaded transformation abroad either by gaining control of the governments of other nations or by imperialistic military measures.

There is, then, no special reason for America's intervention in Indochina, apart from her general policy of intervening anywhere in the world in order to prevent political and social changes that would be detrimental to the so-called 'free world," and particularly to the power which dominates it. Like an octopus, America extends her tentacles into all the underdeveloped countries still under the sway of private-capitalist property relations to assure their continued adherence to the free enterprise principle or, at least, to the old world market relations which make them into appendages of Western capitalism. She tries to rally all pro-capitalist forces into various regional alliances, arms and finances the most reactionary regimes, penetrates governments, and offers aid, all to halt any social movement which might strive for the illusory goal of political and economic self-determination. Because self-determination is not a real possibility, the United States recognizes that attempts to attain it could only result in nations' leaving the orbit of Western capitalism to fall into that of the Eastern powers. By fighting self-determination and national liberation, America is simply continuing her war against the Russian and Chinese adversaries. Although no longer a "cold war," it is as yet fought only on the periphery of the real power issues involved.

Separately, none of the small nations which experienced American intervention endangered the United States's hegemony in world affairs to any noticeable extent. If they were hindered in their attempts to rid themselves of foreign domination and of their own collaborating ruling classes, this was because America recognizes that their revolutionary activities are not accidental phenomena, but so many expressions of an as yet weak but world-wide trend to challenge the capitalist monopolies of power and exploitation. They must, therefore, be suppressed wherever they arise and conditions that will prevent their return must be created, quite apart from all immediate profit considerations. In this respect, the present differs from the past in that while imperialist interventions used to serve to create empires within a world system, such interventions today serve the defense of capitalism itself.

At first glance, America's gains in Asia are quite impressive. She has not only regained the Philippines and destroyed Japan's "co-prosperity sphere," but found entry into nations that only a few years ago had been monopolized by European powers. With the aid of a reconstructed Japan, now allied to the United States, it seemed relatively easy to keep China out

of Southeast Asia and secure this part of the globe for the "free world" in general and the United States in particular. But the "communist" enemy was to be found not only in China but to a greater or lesser extent in all the countries of the region, achieving by subversion what could ostensibly no longer be achieved by more direct procedures. Securing America's newly-won position in Southeast Asia thus required the destruction of native national forces which saw themselves also as communist movements and wished to emulate the Russian and Chinese examples rather than adapt themselves to the ways of Western capitalism.

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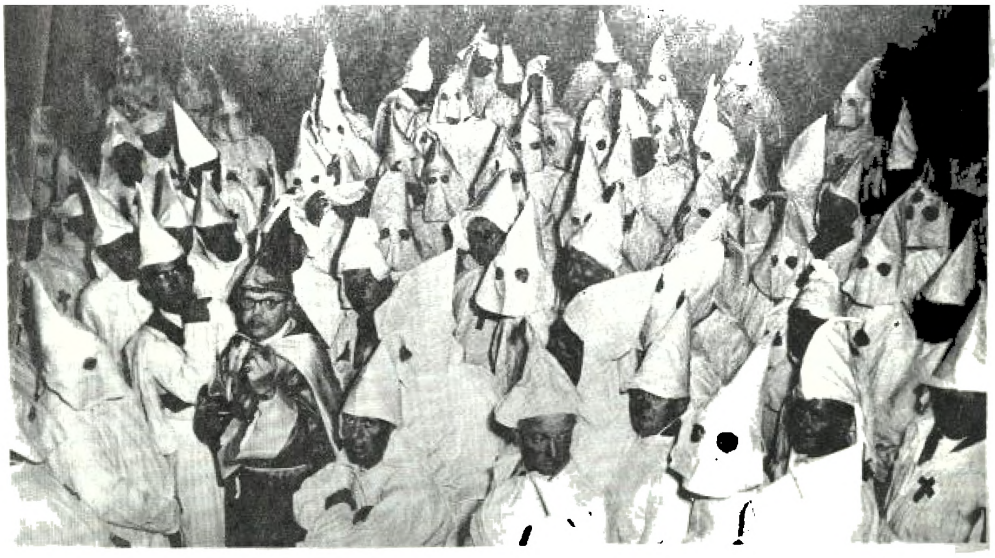
Like all countries, the emerging states in Southeast Asia were divided by different class interests. Different social groups fought for special aims by way of and within the struggle for national liberation, which was thus at the same time a civil war. Its results would determine whether the liberated nations would have societies keeping them within the fold of Western capitalism. It became necessary to influence the outcome of the civil war by outside intervention. For the United States it was essential that whatever the results of the liberation movements they must not lead to new "communist" regimes willing to side with the Chinese adversary. America's politicians rightly surmised that notwithstanding the most exaggerated nationalism, which would tend to oppose a new Chinese domination as it had opposed that of the old colonial powers, China by sheer weight alone would dominate the smaller nations at her boundaries, disguised though this domination would be by ideological camouflage. The surge of nationalism was to be channeled into anti-communism, which meant the upholding or creation of governments and institutions friendly to the United States and Western capitalism.

Political decisions are left to the decision-makers; so long as they are successful they find some kind of general support. Even if the decisions involve war, they will be accepted not only because of the generally-shared ideology, but also because of the practical inability on the part of the population to affect the decision-making process in any way. People will try to make the best of a bad situation – which also has its advantages. Certainly, the armaments producers will not object to the extra profits made through war. Neither will the arms production workers object to it, if it provides them with job security and steady incomes, which might be less certain under other circumstances. The military will see the war as a boon to their profession; war is their business and they will encourage business to make war. Because the mixed economy has become a war economy, many new professions have arisen which are tied to war conditions or to preparation for such conditions. A growing government bureaucracy relies for its existence on the perpetuation of the war machinery and of imperialistic activities. Wide-spread interests vested in war and imperialism ally themselves with those specific to the large corporations and their dependency on foreign exploitation.

While for some war and imperialism spell death, then, for many more they constitute a way of life, not as an exceptional situation but as a permanent condition. Their existence is based on a form of cannibalism, which costs the lives of friend and foe alike. Once this state of affairs exists, it tends to reproduce itself and it becomes increasingly difficult to return to the "normal" state of capitalist production. War itself increases the propensity for war. The American decision-makers, who decided to enter the Indochina conflicts (or for that matter any other) have thus been able to count on the consensus of a large part of the population, a consensus which was by no means purely ideological in nature.

Even so, the United States did not, and has not as yet, declared war against North Vietnam. Allegedly, she still is only defending the endangered self-determination of South Vietnam. The Korean War indicated that, short of risking a new world war, already established "communist" regimes could not be detached from their protector states, Russia and China. In other respects, however, the situation was still fluid. Apart from North Vietnam, other Southeast Asian nations were either anti-communist, or declared themselves "neutralist" or "non-aligned," meaning that their civil wars, clandestine or open, were still undecided. In the case of Laos, this led to a tripartite arrangement, engineered by the great powers, with "neutralist"-, "communist"-, and "western"-oriented forces dividing the country between them. This too was thought of as a temporary solution which would perhaps be resolved at some future date. Cambodia maintained a precarious "independence" by catering to both sides of the overshadowing larger power conflict. Only in Thailand, where America had replaced Britain as the major foreign influence was the com-



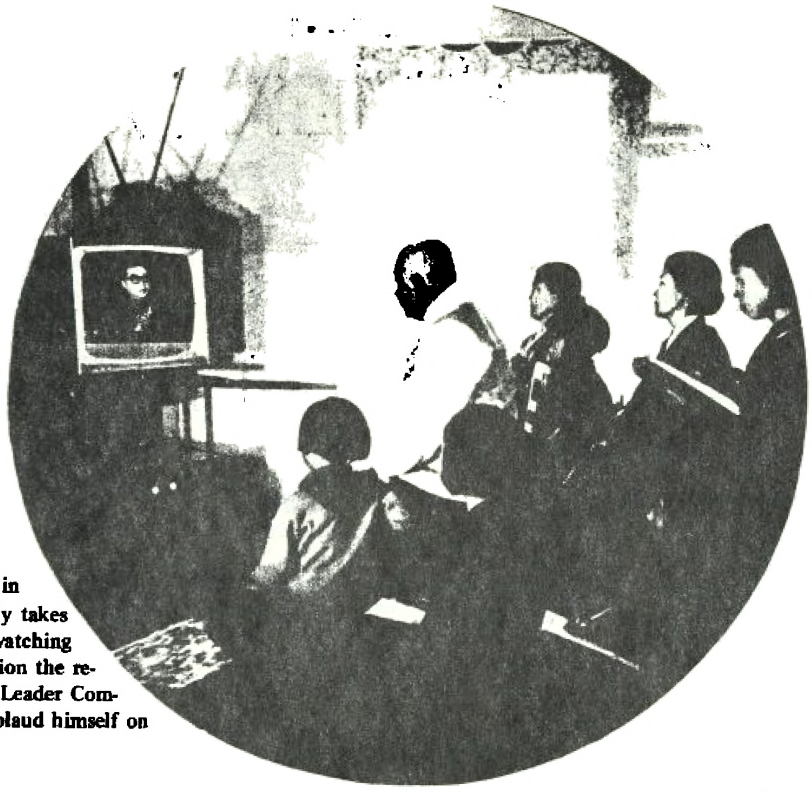
mitment to the West almost complete. Here the United States States sent more than 30,000 troops and much aid to build this kingdom into a bastion of the "free world." (It has become the most important American airbase for the Vietnam war.)

Because of the flexibility of the situation, it seemed essential to the United States to stop any further change in Southeast Asia by assisting all "anti-communist" forces in that region. This has been a consistent policy, from which none of the successive American administrations has deviated. Objecting to the Geneva Agreements of 1954, the American-installed regime of South Vietnam refused to consider the proposed elections, which were to decide the question of unification of South and North Vietnam. To assure the continued existence of South Vietnam, the United States poured money and soon troops into the country. The resumed civil war in the South found support from North Vietnam, turning the American intervention into a war against both the national liberation forces in the South and the North Vietnamese government. This intervention has often been found unjustified, because it concerned itself with a civil war instead of, as claimed, with the national independence of South Vietnam. However (as was pointed out above) in the context of Indochina no distinction can be made between international war and civil war, because here all wars for national liberation are at the same time civil wars for social change. It was precisely because of the civil-war character of the national liberation movements that the United States entered the fray.

America's determination to retain influence in Indochina at all costs did check a possible further extension of social transformations such as occurred in North Vietnam and in a part of Laos. As it became evident that neither Russia nor China would actively intervene in the Vietnamese war, the "anti-communist" forces in Southeast Asia were greatly strengthened and, aided by the United States, began to destroy their own "communist"-oriented movements, the most gruesome of these undertakings being that in Indonesia. But while neither Russia nor China was ready to risk war with the United States to drive the latter out of Southeast Asia, they tried to prevent the consolidation of American power in that region by enabling the Vietnamese to carry on the war. The military aid given to the Vietnamese by Russia and China could not lead to the defeat of the Americans, but promised a prolonged war which would deprive the United States of enjoying the spoils of an early victory. The immediate and growing expenses of the war would, instead, loom ever larger in comparison with its possible positive results, which would recede always further to the indeterminate future. By bleeding the people of Indochina America would in increasing measure bleed herself, and perhaps lose confidence in her ability to conclude the war on her own terms.

It seems quite clear that the Americans expected less resistance to their intervention than they actually came to face. They aspired to no more than a repetition of the outcome of the Korean conflict – a mutual retreat to previously demarcated frontiers, which meant halting the "communist" penetration at the Seventeenth Parallel in the case of Vietnam, and at the agreed-upon zones in Laos. As in Korea, in Vietnam too they had no desire to turn the war into a new world war by bringing Russia, China, or both into the conflict. A war of the great powers, possessing atomic weapons, could easily lead to mutual destruction. The fear of such a war has until now set limits to the war in Vietnam. It has prevented a concentrated, all-out American onslaught on North Vietnam to bring the war to a victorious conclusion, since neither Russia nor China, like the United States herself, can be expected to allow any territory already under their control or in their sphere of interests to be lost, without encouraging further encroachments on their power positions. It was for this reason that the Western powers did not intervene

for Vietnam



At a worker's house in North Korea, a family takes careful notes while watching with boundless emotion the respected and beloved Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung applaud himself on television.

on the occasions of the Russian invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and that America now hesitates to attempt the complete destruction of North Vietnam.

Of course, a nation's determination to hold on to what it has, or has gained, is not absolute. The overriding fear of a possible atomic war, for instance, kept the United States from reconquering Cuba. Nations tend to avoid actions which have a very high probability of leading to undesired results. Uncertainty is the rule, however, and it is the presumed job of diplomacy to weigh the pros and cons of any particular policy with regard to long-run national and imperialistic interests. This may incorporate short-run decisions which need not have a direct logical connection with long-run goals. The latter are, of course, illusory, since the dynamics of capitalism imply an everchanging general situation which escapes political comprehension. The imperialist strategy remains a policy with regard to long-run national and imperialist interests. Since the dynamics of capitalism imply an ever-changing general situation which escapes political comprehension, long-run imperialist strategy put into practice remains a matter of blindly executed activity, in which all diplomatic expectations may come to naught. Actually, the political decision-makers can affect only immediate, short-run goals (which need not have a direct logical connection with the long-run goals). They try to attain a definite and obvious objective. They may reach it or not; if they lose, it will be through the action of an adversary. Until stopped, they will see their course of action as the only "rational" one and will try to follow it up to the end. In the case of Indochina, the simple goal was to secure this part of the world for Western capitalism without initiating a new world war. The unexpectedly effective resistance of the adversaries led to a continuous escalation of the war effort and a growing discrepancy between the limited objective and the costs involved in reaching it.

In one sense, to be sure, the American intervention proved successful, in that it not only prevented the unification of South and North Vietnam but also sustained Westerned influence in Southeast Asia in general. Confidence in the ability to maintain this situation is reflected in new extensive and predominantly private American and Japanese direct investments in oil, timber, and mineral resources in Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, and even South Vietnam. Still, the war goes on, because the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front in the South are not willing to acknowledge defeat and to accept peace on American terms. Short of a successful invasion of the North or an internal collapse of the "communists" there is no reason to expect a change in this situation, though an apparent loss of offensive power on the part of the North Vietnamese and NLF forces is allowing a reduction in the number of American troops in Vietnam.

There is no reason to doubt that at this juncture the United States would prefer a negotiated peace, which would honor her main objectives, to the continuation of the war, if only to stall the growing unrest at home. Opposition to the war

war has begun to affect the military situation through an increasing demoralization of the armed forces. The anti-war movement displays a variety of motivations, but has gained its present strength and dangerous possibilities because of deteriorating economic conditions. It is also the long duration of the war, and the lack of any recognizable advantages gained by it, which turn more and more people against it. There existed from the war's beginning a moral opposition, based on pacifist and anti-imperialist ideologies, which has now found more general adherence – large enough to induce opportunistic politicians to enter the movement to further their personal aims and to keep it within the framework of existing political institutions. But even though war protests are as yet of a merely verbal nature, with an occasional firebomb thrown in, they contain the potentiality of more decisive actions in the near future. In any case, the present administration finds itself obliged to placate the anti-war movement, even though it has no more to offer than the demagoguery of promises which it is in no position to keep.

However, one should neither under- nor over-estimate the anti-war movement. While it is true that its existence has forced the government to masquerade its continued and intensified war activities as so many attempts to reach an "honorable" peace, in its broad majority the opposition to the war directs itself not against the capitalist system, which is necessarily imperialistic, but merely against this particular and apparently unsuccessful war (now viewed as a "big mistake" that needs being undone). And while it is true that the hitherto-displayed apathy about the war on the part of the working population is apparently giving way to a critical attitude, this does not in itself imply independent working-class actions such as could bring the war to an end. Even among the bourgeoisie, not directly favored by the war, dissatisfaction with its course and its internal consequences is visibly rising. But this amorphous anti-war sentiment, affecting all layers of the population, does not as yet constitute a real threat to the Administration's war policy; especially because the government still commands the unswerving loyalty of perhaps a majority of the population, which would no doubt come to its aid should this become necessary. The developing polarization of pro- and anti-war forces points in the direction of civil strife rather than to the government's capitulation to the opposition.

Meanwhile, the government's demagoguery is taken quite seriously – namely, that the war is being "wound down" by way of Vietnamization" in accordance with the "Nixon doctrine," which wants to leave the (capitalist) defense of Asia to the Asians. This demagoguery is seemingly substantiated by a partial withdrawal of American troops and the simultaneous increase of the Vietnamese army, as well as by the intensification of the American air war in Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam. Withdrawal has in fact meant, first of all, the extension of the war into Cambodia and Laos to prepare the conditions under which the Asians themselves will be enabled to take care of all "communist aggression." It would indeed be an "ideal" situation to have Asians fight Asians to secure Indochina for capitalist exploitation. But as matters stand, it is more likely that a real American withdrawal would also be the end of "Vietnamization" and the "Nixon doctrine."

The "ideal" situation is admittedly unrealizable, however, even though an approximation is held to be possible, provided the enemy adapts itself to the American strategy. If it does not, then, of course, the Americans must return in greater numbers to defend their endangered occupation troops The deterrent strategy of a large naval and air presence will be maintained in any case. Even this strategy assumes the continuation of the present military stalemate, which favors the Americans, since it can be utilized for the systematic destruction of enemy forces within the areas under American control. A resurgence of resistance to the Americans and their Indochinese allies becomes increasingly more problematical, as ever greater masses of the population are driven into controlled "refugee" centers and as the countryside is laid waste. If Russia and China continue to stay out of the conflict, the aid they provide by itself will not enable North Vietnam and the NLF to win a war of attrition with the United States.

Clearly, the war will go on as long as the North Vietnamese continue to defy the American will. They will be able to do so as long as they receive sufficient aid from either Russia, China, or both. In this sense, the war is still a war between these Eastern powers and the United States, even though only the latter has engaged her military forces due to the weakness of her Indochinese allies, who were no match for the national-revolutionary forces they set out to combat. The rift between Russia and China has not altered this situation, as each of these nations has its own reasons for opposing the American advance in Asia. Whatever national interests and rivalries divide Russia and China, these interests cannot be furthered for either side through an alliance with the United States, which cannot help treating both as implacable enemies because of their socio-economic structures and their own desires to make themselves secure by gaining greater power and more influence within the world economy.

In summing up, it must be said that the Indochina war has to be seen not as an isolated conflict between America and North Vietnam, but as an aspect of an unfolding wider struggle concerning the whole of Asia and the nature of its further development. Beyond that, it is a special case of a general struggle going on in many parts of the world against the imperialist forms of private capital production. Objectively and subjectively, this struggle can as yet take on no other form than that of national liberation, even though this is not a real solution to the social and economic problems that beset the countries subjugated to the double yoke of native and and foreign exploitation. However, this struggle is itself a sign of an ongoing dissolution of the capitalist mode of production and will, in time, find support in class struggles to be waged in the imperialist nations. For it is more than doubtful that capitalism will be able to overcome its deepening structural crisis by way of outward expansion, since it is certain that all attempts in that direction will meet ever more effective resistance. Whatever the outcome of the struggle in Indochina, it will not affect this general situation.

Paul Mattick

notes on the vietnam war and american capitalism

I. The War and the Agrarian Economy

In the period following World War II, there were widespread spontaneous peasant struggles in South Vietnam aimed at appropriation of land. The Viet Minh and then the NLF tried to base its political force on this peasantry by developing agrarian reform policies. (1) The Viet Minh recognized the appropriation of land by the peasants and at the same time instituted a tax in the form of part of the harvest in order to provide for its troops. In 1955 the Diem government in its turn, instituted a "Rent Reduction Law". Theoretically, this law reduced rent on land to 25% of the harvest, from 50% before the war. However, in practice, this "reduction" in fact meant an increase of 25%, since during the war no constant rent had been collected and the law gave the land that had been taken over by the peasants back to the former landowners.

This measure thus caused increasing unrest and revolt among much of the rural population. In response to his government's progressive loss of control in the countryside in 1957 Diem instituted another law concerning land distribution, Ordinance No.57. According to this law a large landowner could only hold up to 284 acres, the excess to be distributed among the peasants. However, since the peasants had in practice already taken over the land (even though the Diem government continued not to recognize this ownership) the measure only benefited about 10% of the peasants, while the other 90% would have lost land to the landowners if the measure had been put into effect. (2) From this point Saigon's administrative cadres became increasingly the representatives of these land owners, and corruption spread throughout the rural areas. During 1960-1967 the Saigon government completely lost its political and military hold on the countryside, while the NLF built up its political organization in the regions it occupied. 1965-66 represented the turning point in the war, with the massive American involvement and the increasing logistical and political dependence of the NLF on North Vietnam.

In 1964, with the increase in military operations, the NLF policy towards the peasantry underwent some changes. A deemphasis of guerrilla warfare in favor of larger confrontations caused a greater need for funds. Thus since 1964 it has increased its taxes to more than 20% of the peasant's income (at the same time Saigon's average taxes were about 40%). In order to collect these taxes, the NLF was forced to allow the peasantry in the areas that it controlled to sell its agricultural surplus on the market controlled by the Saigon regime. To a certain extent this was the first compromise between the two forces. (3)

Around 1966, the American high command in Saigon began to question the view that political stability was to be found in the support of the large landowners.

At the same time, profound changes in the conduct of the war altered the material conditions of the agrarian economy. Entire provinces in the Center and North, areas of low agricultural production and mainly producing lumber and rubber (the central highlands), were destroyed by bombing raids and military operations. But military operations could not be conducted the same way in the South, the Delta provinces, the traditional base of the agricultural economy in South Vietnam in which 75% of the rice production occurs. (4) While it was possible to totally destroy the Northern and Central regions, the destruction of the Delta would result in thhe rapid and total collapse of the feeble economy of the Saigon regime. At this point American technicians and military began their "pacification" programs, but soon they realized that it could not succeed because it did not even face the question of land ownership. Finally, for the first time since 1957, the Americans and the Saigon regime intervened politically in the agrarian question. After long internal debate, the Land-to-the-Tiller Law was finally instituted in March 1970. Against the projects of some American technicians, who had proposed an obligatory *sale* of the land to the peasants, the law calls for:

> immediate cessation of rent payments simply by application of the tenant operator to his village council; free grant of land to the tenant, with payment to the former owner to be absorbed by the government; no retention of land not cultivated by the owner or his family except for limited amounts devoted to ancestor worship. (5)

This law is "hardly more than Saigon's stamp of approval on the land redistribution already carried out by the communists." (6) The Saigon "technocrats" think that the peasants should be allowed to stay where they are, and that control of them should be won through programs for technical aid and for the creation of cooperatives. (The US has already loaned $3million for the latter. (7))

It is important to remember that up until now most of the peasantry, above all in the Delta, paid their rent twice: once to the NLF, in the form of commodities and logistical support; and a second time when Saigon's troops reoccupied the area. While previously the occupation of land had seemed insecure to the peasants, now not only are they officially landowners, but they no longer – at least in theory – have to make rent payments to Saigon's

troops. In the long run, this fact may create some problems for the NLF because it now appears to be the only rent collector. Of course this will depend on Saigon's ability and determination to clean out the corruption in its rural administration.

I would be false, however, to give too much importance to this so-called Land Reform. It's main significance is that it expresses a change in the Saigon governments's (and US capitalism's) tactics in attempting to win political control over the countryside. It would be at least as large an error to ignore this new trend as it would be to speak of the land reform as an achieved goal.

The legalization of the agrarian reform isn't the only new element in the social conditions of South Vietnam's agrarian economy. The war has produced profound changes in the rural conditions of production. Towards 1965-66 food production fell 7% and South Vietnam, a rice exporting country, began to import. (8) According to the so-called experts, this deterioration of food production, which has been a continuing trend, was caused by the following factors:

1. Less land planted in rice because of the severity of the hostilities;
2. A decreasing farm labor supply as a result of the increasing build up of both the RVN and NLF military forces;
3. The massive increase of free-world forces which has drawn many persons away from farm production and into contruction work and general logistical support at wages above the existing farm wage. (9)

Other forms of agricultural production have also undergone a serious falling off. Rubber production fell by 80% during 1965. (10) The rubber plantations are mainly in the Central region of the country where the bombings were particularly intense during this period of the war. Lumber production was almost entirely destroyed: "One curious effect of the saturation 'pacification' efforts made in the Central Highlands two or three years ago, it seems, was that numerous metal fragments lodged in the trunks of trees and remained embedded there. These ruin saw-blades and make the processing of lumber uneconomic." (11)

Thus it is clear that the material base of much of traditional agricultural production was progressively destroyed by the war. "The attempt to deprive the guerrillas of jungle cover and food supplies by dumping chemical poisons over vast areas of the countryside means the balance of nature in Vietnam has been destroyed for decades to come. The ruthless bombardment of suspected communist positions has desvastated villages and irrigation scheme – the essential capital of the peasant community." (12) The stability of the family unit was severely damaged, its members occupied in tasks other than the traditional (mainly the military service): "The war has prevented two-thirds of South Vietnam's able-bodied men 20 to 30 years of age from filling their normal occupations." (13) In addition, "the current hostilities in rural areas have caused many rural workers to seek safety in the cities and towns, which, as a result, have increased in population." (14) In 1965, 25% of South Vietnam's population lived in urban areas (15); in 1971, according to *Le Monde* of 2/2/71, more than 50% of the total population is living in urban areas. Thus, in the regions in which there is still considerable agricultural production (the Delta) the decline of population and the destruction of the family unit both necessitate and make possible the development of the agricultural production process (an increase in agricultural productivity based on more agricultural machinery and production on a larger scale than the family).

Thus the development of the war after the turning point in 1965-66 had serious effects on the rural economy and so on the political situation. The material basis of traditional agriculture has been destroyed in a large part of the country (the North and Center) and with it the political base of the NLF in the peasants. And in the Delta the balance of power between the NLF and the Saigon regime has been changed by the latter's ability to control the countryside militarily on a larger scale and its attempts to develop a political base through land reform.

II. Vietnamization

During and since the phase of its heavy involvement in the war (1965-66) American capital has been constantly increasing its investments in South Vietnam, mainly in industries producing the logistical basis of the war – provisioning, infrastructure, etc. In fact, the

> US Government has consistently helped big business business move into Southeast Asia. There are no longer import duties on machine equipment

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN NORTH VIETNAM

OR

THE GHOST OF HO CHI MINH MEETS THE HIPPIE MENACE

(Translated from *Le Monde*)

Hanoi (A. F. P.) – On January 6, 7, and 8, the People's Tribunal in Hanoi found one Phan Tang Toan and seven of his accomplices guilty, according to the court record, of having spread "the depraved culture of imperialism and of counter-revolutionary propaganda, hostile to the policy and laws of the State." Phan Tang Toan was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and five years' loss of civil rights. His accomplices received sentences of from eighteen months to twelve years of prison, without parole.

The sentenced men, who can appeal, had been arrested in 1968. The principal accused, Phan Tang Toan, thirty-seven years old, veteran of the French army, admitted, according to the record, that "although he had stayed in North Vietnam when peace came, he did not like the regime and spread counter-revolutionary viewpoints," dreaming of a life of "free licentiousness."In the course of the public trial he had gone on to admit that "he had, before his arrest, gotten togeather certain bad characters, living as vagabonds, to set up an amateur band which tried to spread pessimistic, tear-jerking, and romantic tunes." The group organized secret musical sessions in a prepared decor. There they evoked the depraved life of bourgeois circles, their sexual licence. "This led their victims to fall in their turn into vagabondage and to commit social crimes, giving rise to milieu more open to their counter-revolutionary propaganda," added the court record.

sent to Vietnam. There is a 25% exemption on taxation on capital investment used for expansion. There are no taxes on the profits of US business for five years after investment, and no real estate tax for three years. The Insurance Act of 1967 protects 100% of business assets against expropriation and damage during the war. It further protects debts up to 75% of value. (16)

In 1964 only 13 % of the South Vietnamese GNP came from the industrial sector (17), mainly in industries processing agricultural products: rice, sugar, tobacco, rubber amd paper. Since then, Americans have built up several light industries: textiles, plastics, cigarettes, printing, construction material, pharmaceutical production , electrical materials, etc. Since 1966 heavy industry has begun to develop slowly with an importation of about $17 million worth of industrial machinery through the Commercial Import Program which plans the construction of an auto tire plant, a steel tube plant, an auto battery plant, and pharmaceutical, plastic , glass, and ceramic product plants. (18) Also during this period a generator and a large electrical deisel plant were built in the Saigon area with Japanese private capital.

Some specific examples of American investment in S. Vietnam are: the American Trading Corp. and Brownell Lane Engineering Corp. (heavy machinery tied to the war); Esso and Caltex (construction of a refinery valued at $16 million). In addition, the US Defense Department has made a loan to four American civil construction companies for airports, ports, power palnts, hospitals, bridges, roads, warehouses, etc. (19) Financial channels have been opened in order to facilitate investment: both the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Bank of America have opened branches in Saigon.

In the course of this development of the South Vietnamese economy, the labor force has undergone some important changes. Migration toward the urban areas, particularly of the young, has allowed the creation of a large extremely mobile labor force that could easliy be oriented towards new industrial projects. (20) Military service has provided some training for a large portion of the young manpower; in addition, several enterprises have "provided considerable language and on-the-job training." (21) Still, this labor force at present has largely a so-called lumpen character. However, the urbanization and industrialization of South Vietnam are only tendencies, as the rate of investment is still fairly low due to the lack of economic stability.

This unstable economy is above all characterized by inflation. Between 1967 and 1970 , prices went up 30% a year. (Since then, the government has succeeded in stabilizing the inflation at a lower rate.) This inflation is the result of a war economy in which a large percentage of the population is in the military or para-military sector. (22) Relative to very little real industrial production, an enormous amount of money is being created to pay for non-productive military expenditures. Thus, from 1965 to the first quarter of 1968 the governmental deficit grew from 900 million piasters to 2,000 million. (23)

The increase in the political stability of the Saigon regime during the past few years, mainly through military gains over the NLF, has resulted in the passage of two laws in Saigon. One concerns the research and exploitation of a huge oil field, one of the richest in the world, just discovered in South Vietnam: companies are assured that "goods and rights will not be nationalized..., there will be no tax on exportation..., and it will be possible to expatriate profits freely." (24) The second law is intended to establish a system of easy profit expatriation in order to attract foreign investment. Immediately following the announcement of these laws, the Ford Company of Australia began studying the future construction of an auto-assembly plant in Saigon and the British Leyland Motor Company announced its intention of starting to produce tractors and other agricultural machinery. (25)

The Bank of Asiatic Development has just published a study on the economic future of Southeast Asia. The whole report stresses the need for fuller integration of the area into the Western market (i.e. increased Western investment and flow of Western goods onto the market). For South Vietnam, the Bank states that industrialization must be based on a "green revolution" – i.e. on an increase of agricultural productivity through the modernization of agriculture. This would reduce the prices of agricultural products and thus hold down the level of wages in the urban areas. Also tied in with this "revolution" would be the creation of the industry to produce the necessary agricultural machines and fertilizers. (26)

The war has had a large impact on the other countries of Southeast Asia. Since 1967 South Vietnamese imports from Southeast Asian countries have grown at the expense of those from the US. (27) The RVN share of the total exports of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong-Kong has also increased greatly. The war has created a demand for two types of products: those necessary to the provisioning of an increasing urban population (textiles, food, etc.); and those necessary to the war infrastructures (cement, steel, aluminum, gas, etc.). In many cases these can be more profitably produced in Southeast Asia than in the US. Most of the countries, except Japan, which already had a fairly well diversified economy, have thus gone through "economic booms" only in a given sector of production, a fact which leaves their economies particularly vulnerable to any change in capitalist strategy in this area.

Thus the war in Vietnam has opened up the possibility of the "modernization" of the Vietnamese economy through foreign investment – particularly American, of course. In this context, what is the immediate effect of the withdrawal of American troops?

First, "vietnamization" necessitates an increase in the military effort of the Saigon government in terms of both men and material. From an economic point of view, this "increased spending for military purposes would increase significantly the demand for locally produced goods and services and for imports, and. . . the reduction of US forces in South Vietnam would have the effect of reducing

the Saigon government's foreign exchange earnings." (28) Thus vietnamization means an increase in the amount of money on the market, an increase in imports, and a growing dependency of the Vietnamese economy on the general Southeast Asian economy. To prevent the collapse of S. Vietnam's economy, the US will have to pay through the nose for the withdrawal of its troops. Fifty-three percent of the Saigon government budget is already paid by the US, and Nixon has asked Congress to add to the "normal" aid an addition of about $100 million in order to balance the economic effects of Vietnamization. (The Saigon government claims to need $200 million.) (29) The withdrawal of the troops and the financial aid can only continue the dependence of the South Vietnamese economy on that of the US, its integration into the framework of "free market capitalism" and private investment. This was of course the original goal of the war; vietnamization and troop withdrawals in no sense imply that the US is abandoning its basic goals for the area.

III. Capitalism, War and Peace

The explanation of the change in American strategy from massive military involvement to vietnamization does not lie solely in the current situation in Vietnam, but is rooted in the internal situation of American capitalism as well. In the US the problem of economic stagnation has become increasingly evident. Its ideological and institutional aspects, as well as the "economic" ones (expressed in the constant changes in the monetary policies) are rooted in the capitalist production process itself and its contradictions – i.e. in the increased incapacity of American capitalism to raise its rate of profitable capital formation. This incapacity has not found any solution in these monetary policies . These attempts to reduce labor costs through unemployment have only added to the already great social misery (housing conditions, transportation, health services, etc.). The low rate of capital accumulation has in fact existed since World War II and the high level of unemployment (averaging about 5%) has only been reduced during the war periods (during the Korean War, from 1951-3, it was 3%, and at the height of the Vietnam War, 1966-9, it was 3.6%) through an increased State intervention in the economy in the form of war expenditures. (30)

The current situation is thus centered on the question of State intervention in the economy. Because the largest manifestation of that intervention is the war expenditures, the entire political anti-war movement is necessarily brough into direct confrontation with the question of the economic role of the State, in spite of the fact that its heterogeneous composition causes it to arrive at differing conclusions about the issues of war expenditures and capitalist system.

The stagnation of the economy and the waste production for war are two sides of the same systemic coin. Yet this situation suggests to the liberals the idea that state expenditure should be shifted from waste production to attempts to deal with social needs at home. The liberals' assumption is that the war is a mistake which is preventing the use of America's productive capacities for the creation of an economy of "abundance for all." This conception is based on a refusal to recognize the fact that in a private-corporate capitalist economy, state intervention can only have the function of maintaining the necessary conditions for the existence of private capital.

A total end to war production and total re-orientation of State intervention in the economy, in order to deal with the social poverty that capitalism itself has produced, is not possible in the present private capital oriented economy, simply because it would enormously increase the importance of the public sector over the private one. The strongest sectors of private capital in particular would be greatly affected by the end of State subsidies allocated through war production. While if these limits on State intervention are constantly present and determine the conflict within capitalism, nonetheless the social consequences of the economic stagnation, the increasingly difficult situation of working people, produces political pressure for more State intervention in such sectors as housing, mass transportation, health, education, etc. However, even where the public sector intervenes, it tries to limit its own action and to maintain its general aim of constructing for private capital the conditions for a new profitable cycle (cf. Nixon's health plan, as well as the fight against pollution). The government *is* playing a greater and greater role in the economy (government spending covers 22% of the total GNP in 1970 compared with 14% in 1935 (31)), but the economy remains a private-oriented one. Given this orientation, the war is more necessary than ever in order to create abroad the conditions for profitable investments of private capital. It is in fact only the continuing profitability of private capital, at home and abroad, that will allow a greater State intervention at home. War abroad and State intervention at home are thus two inseparable parts of the same situation; and there is no real choice between the two as long as the survival of private capital is the main goal.*

But if the question is profitable investment in the Third World, can't that be done through cooperation with the State capitalist bloc (Russia and China)? The Vietnam war might seem to be an exception to a situation in which private and State capitalism are developing an increasing "coexistence" in the backward areas, as in Latin America. In fact these are only different situations in the same conflict between western capitalism and State capitalism. The Vietnam War expresses the level of this conflict in an area contested by the two blocs since WWII (and complicated by the additional conflicts existing between China and Russia). In Latin America, on the contrary, US capitalism has until now controlled the whole area, while the intro-

*It should be remembered that, as pointed out above, withdrawal of troops from Vietnam does not mean a great decrease in the war economy.

NOW THERE IS A WAY TO END THE WAR

WHEREAS, the war between the United States and the Vietnamese continues, despite the fierce struggle of our Vietnamese brothers and sisters, who have laid down their lives by the hundreds of thousands

WHEREAS, our government appears to have no intentions of ending our involvement in Vietnam, but plans to continue its air war and bombing and its funding of the puppet ARVN troops to carry out the ground war even if it goes through with its announced program of withdrawing all of our troops from that country

WHEREAS, the Vietnamese people should be given the same right to live under the joy of independence and self-determination as we Americans

WHEREAS, the war has divided our people, setting young against old, worker against businessman, poor against rich

WHEREAS, a majority of the US population is now opposed to the war

WHEREAS, our methods of attempting to end the war through our teach-ins, petitions, peace candidates, mass demonstrations, and *even* civil disobedience, have thus far not met with complete success

AND WHEREAS, it thus seems clear that we can only end this war if we are willing to match our determination and self-sacrifice with that of the Vietnamese, and offer a serious threat upon our government

BE IT KNOWN that, unless our government totally and immediately ends all of its involvement in the war, we the undersigned agree that one month after the receipt of the 100,000th signature on this statement, we will proceed to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and leap off. (see details below)

We express our confidence that our act of courage, if not the mere threat of it, will force our leaders to bring the war to a grinding halt. They would surely recognize the terrible impact of our action: the damage to our nation's world image, the general shock to the domestic population, the loss to the nation of our talents, not to mention the disruption of the economy and 'business as usual.' They will thus be forced to do what we demand of them. We realize that the impact of our action will br maximized by the participation of the broadest spectrum of people and groups within the American population. We therefore invite students, businessmen, professionals,workers, government officals, housewives, union officals, Congressmen, etc. to join us.

IF THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T STOP THE WAR, THE PEOPLE WILL STOP THE PEOPLE.

Please check one of the boxes below and return this endorsement to:
Suicides for Peace, P.O. Box 496, Cambridge, Mass. 02139

[ ] I wish to be registered as a Suicide for Peace and agree to make the aforementioned leap at the stated time.

Signed . . . . . .

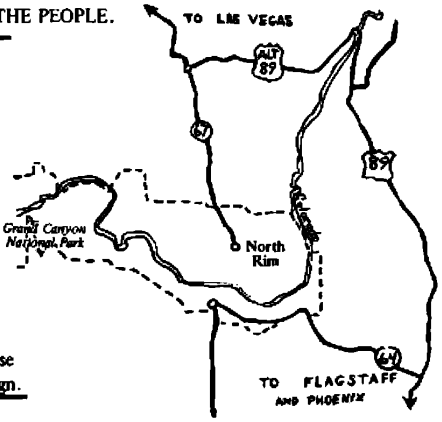
[ ] I wish to be registered as a Witness for Peace and agree to be an observer on the North Rim at the stated time.

[ ] Enclosed is a contribution of $..... to implement the Plan.
(make checks payable to Nicolai Lemming, Treasurer)

Name . . . . . .

Street . . . . . .City . . . . . .State . . . . . .

The AMA has agreed to purchase the bodies at $20 each and distribute them for use at medical schools throughout the nation. Proceeds to go to the McGovern campaign.



duction of European, Japanese and Russian capital on a large scale is just beginning. While this still poses no major threat to US capitalism, it confirms nevertheless its decline in international competetibility. This is due not only to its internal situation but also to the progressive integration of the State capitalist block into the world market. This has just been completed by the steps made by China; after the restructuring of its productive apparatus, realized under the romantic name of "Cultural Revolution", it too has begun to turn toward this integration into the world market (see the recent agreements with Canada, the importance of Japanese capitalism in its trade, and the recent moves towards a "normalization" of relations with the US.) None of this means that the antagonism between the two economic forms of capital production has come to an end. Just as conflict exists at home between State and private capital, so it exists on a world scale between the two capitalist blocks.

IV. Working Class Struggle and the War

In a period of capitalist expansion, working class struggle can be integrated into the developing system. Thus in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the rate of economic growth made it possible for capital to meet both its needs for profit and the workers' demands for a better life. Today, with the economy in a period of stagnation, workers' struggles to maintain and improve their living standards act as a limit to profitability and the accumulation of capital. It is this fact which has made the workers. movement, after a long period of hibernation, reappear in broad daylight on a world scale.

It is on this scale that the labor movement, like capitalism itself, should be analyzed. Workers' struggles spread

all over Europe in a series of erruptions beginning with the mass strike of 1968 in France: in Italy, strikes and worker agitation since 1969, in Sweden the Kiruna and Volvo strikes in December 1969-January 1970, in Belgium the Limbourg strikes of January-February 1970, in England the continuous agitation and wildcat actions of the last few years, in Holland the big strikes at the end of 1970, in Germany the steel and auto strikes in October 1970. These struggles all reflect the beginning of economic stagnation, following the period of rapid and strong capital formation after WW II. throughout Europe. They were unified into a whole movement by the development of capitalism itself, no longer within the narrow limits of each European country but on the level of all Europe. But the spread of the struggles within each social and economic area is a product of the class activity. By the violence of its eruption and by the forms of struggle it takes (wildcat actions, autonomy of organization vis-a-vis the traditional organizations), the objectives of the struggles were rapidly taken up by a large number of workers (cf. the Swedish strikes following Kiruna, the Belgian strikes following Limbourg, the Italian strikes, May 1968 in France).

The present struggles of the American working class against inflation, unemployment, and increasing exploitation are part of this movement (even though they have developed within the context of an already existing lack of profitability for capital): an important part, considering the position of American capitalism in the world capitalist equilibrium. In the US, as elsewhere, the workers are not very worried about the conflict between private capital and the State, which is visible only in the form of contradictory attempts to maintain the exploitation of the workers. Class struggle in America is expressed mainly through autonomous factory revolt: sabotage, absenteeism, rapid turnover, and more and more fights against the union apparatus. Wildcat strikes are causing increasing problems for capitalism. The unions' incapacity to control the working class is itself a product of the current phase of capitalist development: they are unable to obtain the demands that the workers are now making, the need for which has been created by the economic situation also.

At its present level, what is the relation of these working class struggles to the so-called peace movement? First, it is important to realize that this peace movement itself has gone through different phases. During the first phase, which ended with the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State assassinations, the activity was based on the assumption that this heterogenous movement would be able to stop the war by putting pressure on the State apparatus. During the second phase, now beginning, the participants have a much clearer notion of its limits, even if the peace-bureaucrats still say, as they have for years, "stop the war or we'll stop the government." Nevertheless this peace movement, mainly student-oriented, in general continues not to see the war as part of the system of exploitation within this society. Thus, unable to tie the struggle against the war to the struggle going on on the level of production

BIG BUSINESS (to Labor, generously): "My good fellow, you'll be well paid for your patriotic action in 'tending this glorious plant; you shall have all the fruit above the ground—I'll take ONLY the roots!"

Industrial Pioneer, June 1925

(where the basis of all exploitation is), they are brought under the control of the liberal reformist politicians, for whom the peace movement is a way of keeping capitalism intact.

But since the war is not an accident, the fight against the war as such is not enough to bring it to an end. The peace movement sees the struggles of the working people in their work places either as completely separated from itself or as an opportunity to make ideological propaganda – of ideas that must appear to the workers as completely separated from their position and life in production: "Victory to the NLF!", "anti-imperialist struggle!" and so forth. For working people the War is, on the contrary, part of their exploitation. They are paying for it through the profits they create, through inflation and through their lives on the battle field. Unemployment and wage cuts are as much related to the crisis of capitalism as the war itself. Thus it is not *their* struggles that should be oriented toward the war issue (normally those who "represent" workers in the anti-war demonstrations are those who re-

press the workers in production – the union bureaucrats who have the free time to go to demonstrations while workers stay in the factories); but it's the war issue that should be brought to the working people's struggles. Only the struggles of working people against exploitation and war *(as further exploitation)* can bring an end to the war; only on this basis could the peace movement be integrated into a social movement of working people. Until then the only workers who show up in the movement will be there as individuals, "morally concerned", but not as workers struggling against the system that exploits them and creates war to maintain or increase this exploitation. Beyond the fact that only a socialist mass movement can end *all* the wars, by ending the system that produces them, the present peace movement will only become a real burden for capitalism when it goes far beyond the strict end-the-war issue. Only then, also, will the peace movement be cleared of all "progressive bosses" and GOOD liberal politicians who currently see in it a good channel for their class interests: i.e. the perpetuation of the present system of exploitation and social misery.

Jorge M.E. and friends

notes

(1) A critical account of the Viet Minh's and the NLF's origins, its relationship with the peasantry and its role in the smashing of the mass movement in Saigon in September 1945, is given in the pamphlet *The Rape of Vietnam*, published in England by London Solidarity in 1967 and just reprinted in the US by: Philadelphia Solidarity, GPO Box 13011, Philadelphia, PA 19150.
(2) *Far East Economic Review (FEER)*, August 20, 1970. South Vietnam – The battle over land, p. 19.
(3) *The Economics of Insurgency in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam*, by Robert Samsom, published by MIT Press, Cambridge, 1970.
(4) *Bureau of Labor Statistiques, (BLS)* Report No. 327, 1968. Labor Law and Practice in RVN, p. 4.
(5) and (6) *FEER*, August 20, 1970, p. 20.
(7) *Asian Survey*, vol. X, No. 8. The broadening base of Land Reform in RVN, p. 731.
(8), (9), and (10) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 5.
(11) *FEER*, July 16, 1970. South Vietnam – a need to revalue, p. 26-7.
(12) *FEER*, July 16, 1970. The rape of Indochina, p. 21.
(13) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 5.
(14) and (15) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 22.
(16) *US News and World Report*, April 1969.
(17) and (18) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 6.
(19) *Fortune*, September 1966.
(20) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 24.
(21) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 17.
(22) *BLS* 327, 1968, p. 23.
(23) *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East*, United Nations 1967.
(24) and (25) *Le Monde*, March 9, 1971, french edition. Feu vert de Saigon pour les Investissements Etrangers.
(26) *Southeast Asia's Economy in the 1970's*, Bank of Asia Development, Manila, Philippines, 1971.
(27) *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East*, United Nations 1967.
(28) *FEER*, July 16, 1970, p. 26.
(29) *FEER*, July 16, 1970, p. 27.
(30) *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* April 5, 1971.
(31) *WSJ*, February 1, 1971.
(32) Perhaps a few comments on the nature of the NLF would be in order at this point. Looking at the NLF program, we find, as with all political programs of united fronts with the bourgeoisie (here "national" there "progressive") that the interests of the working class are put below those of the ruling class. The Association of Workers for Liberation, the working class organization of the NLF, says on this question:

> In order to assure ourselves of the forces capable of bringing the revolution to a triumph, the wage-earners are determined to *unite* with the owners; we will *discuss together*, we will make *mutual concessions*, in such a way as to guarantee the *interests of the two parties* and to concentrate our forces, to fight with the whole people against the common enemy of the nation.

If this is necessary to "achieve the revolution" lets have a picture of the situation of working people after the "revolution":

> [we, the NLF, will] institute a Labor Code; apply the 8-hour day and institute a system of paid vacations. Establish rational wages and a system of *bonuses that favor an increase in production*. Ameliorate the living conditions of the blue- and white-collar workers. Institute a regime of adequate remuneration for apprentices. Give work to poor workers; struggle actively for the end of unemployment. Institute social security to watch over the health of workers and to come to their aid in case of illness, incapacity, or old age and retirement. *Regulate the differences between owner and worker by means of negotiation and mediation by the democratic national administration.* Formally prevent bodily infliction of wounds on workers as well as fines taken out of wages and lay-offs *without cause*; [our emphasis] (*The NLF Symbol of Independence, Democracy and Peace in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1967, pp. 80-81, quoted in the Solidarity Pamphlet)

In other words, nothing that the Ford Motor Company and George Meany would disagree with.

Of course the NLF fans will say: "That's just a program; after the victory the power will go to the Communists in the NLF." Although this is probably true, it does not mean that the problems of Vietnamese working people will be solved. For them, an NLF victory would mean the creation of a sort of socialism not very different from that which already exists in Russia, China, or Cuba: i.e., a State Capitalist system in which the working class has a part of its own labor expropriated in the form of "socialist" capital. Whether done under state capitalism or under an economic system more closely tied to Western "free market" capitalism, *development* means accumulation of capital under the same social relations of production – i.e. one group of people does all the work, and another group of people decides what to do with the products of the labor. So accumulation means exploitation of working people. The end of all forms of exploitation can only be brought about by the working class of the developed countries: when it abolishes its exploitation it will abolish the domination of its capitalism over the backward areas and the population there.

What kids think

by Marcia Butman, a teacher at East Boston High

Reprinted from The Red Pencil, March 1971

What should happen is the two leaders should fight it out. If they are two chicken to have a fist fight then they should play a game of checkers. Whichever leader wins, wins the war. The war has nothing to do with us so why should we fight it.

During my two years teaching at East Boston High, I've learned a lot about what kids think about the war in Vietnam and why they have the opinions they do. If we, as teachers, want to help kids think critically and understand the real reasons for the war, then it's very important that we understand *why* they think the way they do. Without understanding what in their backgrounds—both economic and social—makes them have these opinions, we can't even begin to have conversations with them, much less open them up to new ideas and ways of thinking.

I. Macho vs. Victim

I think we should have a military victory in Vietnam because it's too late to have immediate withdrawal so I think we should stay in Vietnam until we win. What I mean by too late is that it's too late to draw back because there are over 1,000,000,000 people already killed from the United States.

E.B. High student (boy)

I think we should have immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. We can't afford to lose more lives of those we love. Planned withdrawal is too slow and winning the war will prove nothing except more death and trouble.

E.B. High student (girl)

Boys and girls often have very different views on the war, and they have different solutions. Boys in working class communities are brought up tough; often their life, or at least their reputation depends on it. They know they have to be tough to make it in the world they will soon face—the draft, lousy jobs, a competitive world. They have to be tough to earn the respect of their friends and most important, themselves. Until recently, when drugs, hippie culture and music reached the working class, there were no alternatives for a boy at all. If you weren't tough, you were "queer". Boys were not expected to show emotions or feelings or be concerned about anybody but themselves. Therefore, a boy's solution to the war is to bomb Vietnam off the map, to fight and win, to never give in. In a classroom, a teacher will never get anywhere arguing logically about why bombing is wrong until she/he reaches the root of the problem: the boy's attitudes towards toughness and violence, and why these attitudes are necessary for them in the world today.

Girls do not have to be tough to make it. Just the opposite. They expect to grow up and be somebody's wife, take care of the kids and provide some warmth and emotion in their husband's otherwise brutal existence. They are victims; they have little to say about their lives, but always depend on someone else for their happiness and well being. Because they are "allowed" to express emotion and are expected to provide comfort and solace, they can identify with human suffering, and with other people who are victims. They usually think we should get out of Vietnam right away to end all the death and suffering. They see their son, brothers, boy friends and fathers being hurt all the time. They want to prevent any more sorrow than is absolutely necessary.

II. Hearing vs. Knowing: The Media vs. Real Experience

I want military victory because I think we should win in Vietnam because America is the most powerful nation. It will effect the honor of the United States. Also I think if we don't win then North Vietnam will start spreading to other countries.

I also want immediate withdrawal because a lot of

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people are dying there and taxes have been raised up to our necks, but the people don't earn enough because there are so many factories that are closing and people can't pay the tax.

P.S. Miss Butman I had to vote for two solutions because there are two sides to this.

Working class kids believe a lot of what the media and the government officials tell them. They think we are in Vietnam to stop North Vietnam from invading the south, to stop communism (instead of continuing imperialism) and to preserve the honor of the United States. They believe that it is necessary for the United States to be fighting in Vietnam. They accept all this because they have never been expected to think critically. The public schools they go to don't even give critical thinking and independence token support. (That's not what they kids are supposed to learn: they'll never have to use their brains.) The communities they live in are closed off from new information and different ideas and life-styles. They never get a chance to hear or think about different opinions. They don't live on college campuses. They don't have the tools to challenge the information they are given.

On the other hand, they know real things about the war that contradict all that they have read. They get very confused when their real information conflicts with the information the media feeds them every day. They *know* that the war is bad for them and their families. Men are getting killed, taxes are going up. Kids don't like the war because it is bad for *them*. Their attitude is very different than middle class kids who don't like the war because it is killing the Vietnamese or is morally wrong. The kids at East Boston rarely think about the Vietnamese. They don't know what is happening the the Vietnamese people. That information never reaches them. All they know is that the war is hurting them and they don't like it.

The kids carry both what they know and what they hear around in their heads. Instead of realizing that the war is bad for them and then trying to figure out why we are there since it is bad, they believe both things. They don't always have enough confidence in themselves and in their own ability and intelligence to really trust their own feelings. (After all, they've always been told they were dumb.) When they begin to trust themselves and their experience (and a lot of them are beginning to) instead of what other people tell them, then they will want to figure out why we are really fighting this war. Now, many of them carry around confusion and contradiction in their heads.

III. Anti-Communism vs. Self-confidence

What we need is one man to run the whole world. Then there will be peace. Unless there is a dictator then people will always be fighting and no-one will ever be able to get along.

But why can't we run free—and do what we want and get along with everybody?
from a conversation in a U.S. history class

Kids ideas about everything stem from their beliefs about human nature. They don't trust themselves or anybody around them. They can't, or they won't survive in the dog-eat-dog world. They believe that human nature is inevitably bad and has to be controlled. People can't possibly control themselves. After all, everything in their life is solved by repression and authority. Teachers have to be tough or the kids will go crazy. When I asked kids to write about their idea of a good parent, a lot of them said parents have to be strict and hard, even though many were fighting with their parents every night. When there's a disagreement in the neighborhood, call the cops.

They have never seen non-authoritarian solutions work. Often nice teachers with liberal ideas about freedom get trampeled on by the kids. Even among friends, things aren't usually talked out. Emotions are never expressed openly to each other. This belief in human nature—what they see proven in themselves and their life every day—makes it impossible for them to see non-repressive, nonauthoritarian solutions. When we discuss "ideal" communism, the kids say it would never work because people are bad and can't work together. They can't work together, they've never had that freedom. So why should they expect other people to do it. When a kid wants to "run free", he is bombarded with questions like "who would work? who would grow the food? wouldn't everyone just sit around?"

These kids have less feeling of control and power than any other group in society (except the blacks). They have been controlled all their lives. They have only an authoritarian relationship to the government

and the society. They have no trust in themselves or in their ability to work things out together, because they have never had an opportunity to try it.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

As teachers. In the classroom kids need to know their opinions are respected, that they can think, that they are smart, that their experience is valid. If they begin to believe in themselves, everything else follows. Our country is built on people believing in everybody but themselves.

The classroom can also be a place where new information is brought to the kids. My kids asked me what was happening to the Vietnamese people after I showed them some pictures of napalmed kids. They had never considered the question before and were shocked when they found out what was really happening. As a teacher, we can give them information with which to challenge the authority of the media and the government's version as complete truth.

As people. We are not only what we are in the classroom. We need to be much more than that if kids are really going to change, grow, and trust themselves. Before anyone can begin to believe in themselves, they have to have some vision of an alternative way of acting. Until they see something else working, they have no reason to believe that something else can work. We can begin to show them that something else can work.

Last year kids were very much influenced by our living collective which shared money and personal decisions. They began to act more collectively themselves. We have to be able to point out things that work: collectives, food co-ops, free health clinics, free schools.

We have to take ourselves and what we believe seriously if we expect the kids to take us and themselves seriously. This means taking risks and speaking out about what we think is wrong with the schools. It also means trying to change and grow and challenge ourselves to live in the way we think is right: combatting chauvinism, racism, individulism, competitiveness and self-hate. It means actively trying to change the society that makes this difficult. We can't just be teachers, or we will never teach our kids anything.

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